A Glimpse into the History of Ehden

The Most Legendary Ehdenian Battles

(2000 BC- 1976)





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Foreword and Dedication:

Why would someone write about the history of Ehden and the most glorious Ehdenian battles?

The Ehdenians' involvement in different sorts of wars since the earliest Phoenician era has always been due to their relentless fight for free existence and sovereignty.

The Ehdenians reside on the highest mountains of North Lebanon. They experienced the harshness of nature and faced many critical conditions including atrocities, wars and invasions, but never humiliation. As the Ehdenians are united and well organised, they managed to protect their lands and very exclusive identity. They had to fight against intruders and when they became Christians in the 5^{th} century, they defended their lands and religion with courage and faith, for the Ehdenians had never separated themselves from their Church and their broader community. Many Ehdenians have offered their lives for the independence of Lebanon.

We do not know exactly how many times the Ehdenians had to fight for their lands and dignity. In the history of Ehden, numerous invaders occupied Lebanon, but Ehden was a strong fortress, which resisted intruders and repelled enemies. Only because of that pertinent resistance, Ehden is today the most eminent and strongest purely Maronite town. It has offered Lebanon thousands of martyrs as well as religious and political leaders.

It is important to note that Ehden was established earlier than many well-known Phoenician cities. Ehdenians believe that Ehden was the terrestrial paradise. According to Psalms, "The trees of the Lord are full of sap; the cedars of Lebanon, which He hath planted." (Psalms 104-16) The Ehdenians have always believed that their town is the subject of this particular Bible verse.

The great Patriarch and historian, Estephanos Douaihi, referred to the Old Testament when he considered Ehden as the terrestrial paradise. Hence, Ehdenians believe that the oldest city is built on their land. The ruins of that city are still obvious in

the east of Ehden (اليسوعي، 1986، ص 103).

There is no doubt that Ehden is a very ancient village, while Zagharta was settled in hundreds of years later. Some historians argue that Zagharta was granted to the Ehdenians in 1516 by King Saleem of Constantinople, after the Ehdenians helped his men in their harsh and snowy trip to collect taxes from Lebanon and Syria. It is widely held that the Ehdenians settled in Zagharta around 1516, and since then, they dubbed it "Ehden of the Coast".

I dedicate this book to my beloved village, to all the Saints and martyrs, and to all the men and women who believe in freedom and liberty.

Jamil El - Doaihi

Ehdenians: People of Faith and Courage

Writing about the history of Ehden is nothing less than writing about heroism, bravery and free existence. Ehden was, and is still, the beating heart of resistance against all invaders and intruders. The Ehdenians have always formed an excellent military force which has protected Lebanon and preserved its freedom and dignity.

Throughout the course of history, many great invaders marched into Ehden such as Alexander the Great, Pompeii and the Mameluke Al Mansour Kalaoun. Ehden was destroyed and burnt several times, but it has risen from ashes like the Phoenix.

Ehden is a symbol of steadfastness for the Maronite people, who refuse to abandon their land and spiritual identity, despite the continuous oppression imposed on them by tyrants and persecutors. The geographical location of Ehden, being close to Jebbeh, Bcharre, and Kadisha Valley, has made its citizens deeply involved in the ultimate process of protecting the

Maronite faith.

The Ehdenian personality is very strong and full of faith. The local Ehdenian linguistic accent is tough but sweet. It is a symbol of exceptional courage, for the Ehdenian hates to be defeated and refuses to hide from honest fighting, regardless of the number of soldiers he is confronting. The popular traditions in Lebanon preserve numerous stories, jokes and legendary historical passages about the bravery of the Ehdenians, and about their fearless military leaders and their sacrifices for Lebanon.

The Ehdenians were born and raised in high, snowy and cold terrains. The rocky environment offered them toughness. The tall mountains provided them with pride and bravery. The Ehdenians consider defeat as shameful and fleeing the battlefield as self-disrespect. They believe that defending their land means defending the honour of their families, the glorious history of their ancestors, and above all, their religion.

The Ehdenians have also been involved in several skirmishes far

from their boundaries. They had moved to Palestine in 1900 BC to support their Canaanite brothers in their war against the Israelis. Many years later, they rushed, led by their hero Youssef Bey Karam, to save Zahle and other cities and towns from atrocities. Some of them went to Syria to fight with the French, for Ehden's citizens were generally loyal to Europe long before Patriarch Estephanos Douaihi's era. The greatest Patriarch maintained strong ties with the French King, Louis XIV. Douaihi used to call the French government for help in difficult circumstances. On one occasion, Douaihi sent a messenger, John Judicy, to the French King. Judicy carried a letter in which the Patriarch requested the Maronites should be allowed to carry the French flag when they advance to fight their rivals. Carrying the French flag meant that the Maronite people were under France's protection.

The strong bonds between Ehdenians and Europeans go back to the Crusades era, when the Ehdenians showed their great support to the Europeans who desired to control the Holy Land of Palestine.

In general, the Ehdenian people respect the sanctity of their land and their exclusive heritage. Four Maronite Patriarchs were Ehdenians: John Makhlouf, Gerges Oumaira, Estephanos Douaihi and Jeremiah Oubeid Douaihi (Al Amchiti). Also, many Ehdenians were Archbishops and priests. Furthermore, Ehden offered Lebanon several political and military leaders, two presidents, Soulaiman Frangie and Rene Mouawad, as well as intellectual figures. This spiritual and secular generosity granted the Ehdenians a high grade of pride and self-esteem.

The existence of many churches in Zagharta and Ehden is clear evidence of the deep connection between the Ehdenian society and the sanctity of their environment. The Ehdenians' willingness to honour the Saints is a symbol of thankfulness to God, who has guarded them throughout the centuries and has protected them during ruthless and vicious battles.

The Earliest Ehdenian Battles:

There is no doubt that Ehden has played a great historical role in preserving the sovereignty of the mountains of North Lebanon. In fact, Ehden was always considered one of the most unattainable fortresses in the eyes of North Lebanon's residents.

(فغالي، 2002، ص 138)

The history of Ehden dates back to the earliest Phoenician era along with Jbeil, Tyre and Sidon. Historians have praised the role of these coastal cities and have neglected several smaller villages, despite the fact that the Phoenicians left many high temples in Ain Ikrin, Bziza, Dar B'ashtar, Hardine, Aintoura, Beit Meri and Faqra. Ehden was one of the several spiritual Phoenician cities. In Ehden, the Phoenicians built the famous temple of Baal, who offered his name to a large piece of land, located in Eastern Ehden, called B'oul. Furthermore, the name "Ehden" may have been derived from "Adon" or "Adonis", the famous Phoenician god.

Patriarch Estephanos Douaihi goes even further to claim that Ehden was in fact Eden, as we mentioned earlier. It is not essential to prove that Ehden was or was not Eden. Our concern is to verify that Ehden was built in the ancient days of the Phoenician civilisation. The earliest Ehdenian battles were mentioned in an ancient manuscript which was written by an unknown Ehdenian citizen. He hid it under his shirt when the Ehdenians were forced to leave their village in the mid-summer of 1282. In that year, the Mamelukes attacked Ehden.

The writer of the manuscript concealed it with a close friend. Father Gerges Yammine discovered the document in the 18th century. After his death, the document was given to his son. It was again transferred to Monsignor Boulos Hanna Dib Saade. One copy of the manuscript was found in 1930 in the Monastery of the Lebanese Missionaries in Jounieh.

The most important parts of the ancient document quoted the following:

"2500 years after Creation, the Ehdenians moved to Mount

Palestine to support the Palestinians in their fight against the Israelis. In return, Ehden was destroyed, and Ehdenians then settled in Mount Palestine... Ehden remained destroyed for 439 years. Then the Syriac King, Hezra Azar (*) rebuilt it and constructed a statue of Ehden's god or God of Snow... In 3252 after Creation, Sennech'erib, the king of Assyria in Iraq, invaded Ehden, burnt it and killed hundreds of its citizens. His leader Rab-sha'keh, a Syriac, demolished the statue of the God of Snow.

Ehden remained deserted until 3654 after Creation. Then Seleukos, one of Alexander the Great's army leaders, rebuilt the village and made it the home of his fellow Macedonians. Some of Ehden's citizens spoke Macedonian during that era.

***Hezra Azar was one of the earliest kings who lived in tents before the independence of Ashur. We know nothing about his life, but we know that he preceded Zarikum, Pozor Ashur the First, Shalm Aho, Allo Shuma, Arishma the First and Surgeon the First (2334 BC - 2279 BC)**

Seleukos established in Ehden a huge temple dedicated to the God of the Sun.

After the death of Alexander, Ehden was besieged once again by Pompeii. It was demolished and many innocent Ehdenians were killed.

Fifty years later, the Syriacs rebuilt Ehden and resided there. No more wars erupted around Ehden before the Ehdenians gathered to fight against the King's two leaders, Maurikian and Markianos." (المخطوط مترجم عن خازن، ج1، ص 80-82)

According to this ancient document, Ehden experienced six different political and military situations:

1-The Battle of Palestine:

It is debatable that the date of the first Ehdenian battle in Palestine (2500 years after Creation), as mentioned in the ancient document is accurate, because we know that Palestine was known in ancient history as "Canaan's Land". The Palestinians are Canaanites who resided in Palestine following

one of their migrations from the Arabian Peninsula either in 2500 BC or a few years earlier (الرشيدات، 1991، ص29).

Jawwad Boulos argues that the blood relationship between the Canaanites in Lebanon, Palestine and the coast of Northern Syria was clearly proven by their one language and the similarities of their names…The ancestors of the Phoenicians had conflicted with other Semitics, who housed and supported the Hebrews or Israelis (بولس، ج1، ص 259 -260).

The Israelis returned from Egypt to Palestine in 1290 BC, fleeing the injustice of Ramesses the Second (1292-1290 BC). They crossed the Eastern Desert led by Moses. They stayed for forty years in the desert between the Egyptians and the Canaanites… After the death of Moses, Joshua crossed with the Israelis to Palestine in 1186 BC. The Israelis occupied Jericho, burnt its houses and killed most of its residents. They settled there in the Jordan Valley, near the Dead Sea, for they could not advance further to the west because the Canaanites were controlling Jerusalem, the coast and other parts of

Palestine. In 1000 BC, King David established the Kingdom of Israel after a long war (الرشيدات، 1991، ص 30).

King David, who was the second King of Israel, pushed the Phoenicians away to the coast and disarmed them. He controlled the land between Gaza and Damascus.

Based on this brief recount of the Phoenician-Israeli relationship and on the old manuscript, we conclude that:

- The Ehdenians went to Mount Palestine between 2500 BC and 1000 BC. It is possible that the Israelis and the Phoenicians had some earlier frequent clashes, particularly during the ruling of Sidon's King, Kirit, and the son of Abraham, Tareh. A long poem was discovered on a Phoenician site, Ras Shamra, describing the defeat of the Phoenicians. The poem claimed that the Jewish Army was extremely large and consisted of more than three million men and a great number of Bedouins.
(بولس، ج 1. ص 456)

- The Ehdenians might have defended Jericho in 1186 BC and some of them were killed there. Later, Ehden was destroyed.

- The Phoenicians helped the Canaanites in their combat against the Israelis for they were themselves Canaanites. Ehden might have been one of the most important Phoenician cities along with Jbeil (Byblos), Sidon and Tyre. There are at least three old places that allude to ancient Phoenician Ehden:

- Bab Al Hawa (Door of the Wind): Here the Ehdenians built a huge statue dedicated to the God of Snow. This statue had two large holes in its chest and mouth. Whenever the wind blew, a noisy sound came out of the two holes. The Ehdenians had to leave their houses following the noise and kneel to pray to their god.

- Al B'oul: This rocky location was a holy place. The ancient Ehdenians built a statue there dedicated to the Phoenician god, Baal.

- Our Lady of the Fortress' Mountain: It was called the Mountain of Onat (Onat was a Phoenician goddess). On the top of that high mountain, there was a temple and fortress which date back to the Phoenician era. The Ehdenians used

the stones of that fortress to build the Church of Our Lady of the Fortress. Meanwhile, the Mountain of Saint Sarkis is still known as the Mountain of El. El was one of the greatest Phoenician gods.

2-Sennech'erib's Invasion:

According to the same ancient document, Sennech'erib invaded Ehden in 3252 after Creation and his leader, Rab-sha'keh, demolished the statue of the God of Snow.

Sennech'erib attacked Palestine and Phoenicia because the Israelis, Phoenicians and Egyptians refused to surrender to him and disagreed to pay him a large amount of taxes. Sennech'erib wrote on a stone, preserved in the British Museum, that he attacked Sidon, killed its inhabitants, destroyed its walls and houses, and captured its King with many citizens and took them to Assyria (الدبس، ج1، مج 2، 1983، ص 511).

Rab-sha'keh was one of the three Assyrian Army leaders. He was sent to Palestine to warn the Israelis about the seriousness of Sennech'erib. Rab-sha'keh told the Israelis that Sennech'erib will

attack them if they do not break their alliance with Egypt. It is written in the Old Testament about Rab-sha'keh, "Now it came to pass in the fourteenth year of king Hezekiah, that Sennacherib king of Assyria came up against all the defenced cities of Judah, and took them. And the king of Assyria sent Rab-sha'keh from Lachish to Jerusalem unto king Hezekiah with a great army. And he stood by the conduit of the upper pool in the highway of the fuller's field. And Rab-sha'keh said unto them, Say ye now to Hezekiah, Thus saith the great king, the king of Assyria, What confidence is this wherein thou trustest? I say, sayest thou, (but they are but vain words) I have counsel and strength for war: now on whom dost thou trust, that thou rebellest against me? " (Isaiah, 36:1-5)

Sennech'erib instructed Rab-sha'keh to lead his army that besieged Jerusalem, but when a sudden epidemic killed 185,000 of Rab-sha'keh's men, he fled to Nineveh.

(الدبس، ج 1، مج 2، 1983، ص 498-499)

3-Ehden under Alexander's Ruling:

The old manuscript refers to Seleukos, one of Alexander the Great's army leaders, who rebuilt Ehden and made it the home

of his fellow Macedonians. He established in Ehden a temple dedicated to the God of the Sun.

We know that Alexander invaded Turkey, Syria and Lebanon during his bitter conflict with Darius, the Persian King. Alexander occupied many Phoenician cities and reached India. The most realistic scenario shall be that Alexander occupied Ehden on his way from Eastern Lebanon (Bekaa Valley) to the Phoenician coast. Green claims that Alexander the Great invaded the Lebanese mountains: "Alexander himself took a flying column up into the rough snow-clod wastes of the Lebanese ranges, and spent ten days harrying the tribesmen who had threatened his supply lines. One evening, he and his immediate entourage fell behind the main troop... When night fell, they were lost, and shivering with cold. Beyond them twinkled the campfire of their elusive opponents. Alexander went out alone, Indian scout fashion, crept up on the nearest encampment, knifed two natives and got away with a large flaming branch." (Green, 1991, p. 255)

It is believed that the unique accent of the Ehdenians is

comprised of Phoenician, Syriac, Arabic and Macedonian dialects.

4- Destruction of Ehden by Pompeii:

There is no clear historical evidence about Pompeii's invasion and destruction of Ehden. All that is known is that Pompeii (106 - 48 BC), a Roman Caesar, attacked Syria, Lebanon and Palestine in 64 BC. Soon after, Lebanon became a part of the Roman Kingdom. Pompeii would not have reached the Lebanese coast from Syria without passing through the highest mountains of Lebanon.

Meanwhile, Ehden was a hub for rich Phoenicians and Romans, who built their summer houses on high mountains.

Archaeologists have found in Ehden statues carved in the rocks, old Roman writings, tombs and other monuments.

5-The Battle against Maurikian and Markianos:

The battle against the two Byzantine leaders, Maurikian and

Markianos took place on the verge of a new spiritual era. This battle, which happened in Amioun, followed the conversion of Ehden's citizens from Paganism to Christianity.

As previously explained, Ehden was a spiritual center for Paganism in the Lebanese mountains.

Soon after the Ehdenians became Christians, they destroyed their old temples and used their stones to build churches such as Saint Mamas', Saint Ghaleb's, Our Lady of the Fortress'... Some of the ancient stones can still be seen in the walls of those churches and some old Ehdenian houses.

One elderly citizen claimed that some workers found a huge idol while they were digging to build Saint John's Church. They could not recover the statue. Hence, they constructed the church over it.

Historians claim that Ehdenians became Christians in the 5th century, when the Lebanese of Mount Lebanon embraced Christianity through the influence of Saint Simon Al Amoudi,

one of Saint Maroun's followers.

Saint Simon lived between 389 and 459. He possessed the power of healing the sick. For this reason, many people approached him to seek healing for their sick relatives. Some of Saint Simon's visitors were Ehdenians.

The Lebanese villagers were disturbed by vicious animals that were attacking their flocks. Saint Simon said to them: "Go back to your villages, get baptized and convert to Christianity. Then set four crosses around every village." Saint Simon also sent some of his disciples to Lebanon to preach. Some stone crosses were discovered near Ehden.

However, we believe that some Ehdenians may have embraced the principles of Christianity long before Saint Simon's era. Ancient writings on the walls of Saint George's Church indicate that this church was built in 272.

Following their conversion to Christianity, the Ehdenians became committed to defending their religion. The Maronite

Patriarchal Chair was always a sanctified symbol to live and to die for.

The first Maronite Patriarch was Saint John Maroun. He had to confront the believers of Jesus' one nature (Monophysite). The Byzantine king, Justinian (669 - 711), who hated the Maronites and supported the followers of Monophysite, sent to Syria and Lebanon two of his finest military leaders, Maurikian and Markianos, to kill Patriarch Saint John Maroun.

Justinian has been described by historians as harsh and unjust. He was well known for his desire to kill and show intolerance, unstable mood, anger and bad opinions.

(فهد، ج 12، 1997، ص 24)

Justinian also lacked constancy. He was crowned when he was only sixteen years old. He was ambitious, and keen on celebrating greatness and glory... His doubt about others and his passion for violence turned into an obsession for killing.

Patriarch Estephanos Douaihi claims that Justinian sent to Lebanon a huge army led by Maurikian and Markianos. They

killed the monks of Saint Maroun's Monastery at the Assi River. Then they entered Koura, between Amioun and Nawoos (Ain Ikrin). The villagers attacked them from high mountains and fought them until Maurikian and Markianos were killed.

(الدويهي، 1890، ص 80-82)

It is important to note that the Byzantine king could not have sent his army to Lebanon and Syria without getting permission from the Arabs. Some historians assumed that the Arabic ruler of Tripoli, Sahim, Son of Mouhajer, helped the Byzantines to enter Lebanon in order to punish the Maronite people. Meanwhile, Justinian agreed with the Arabs to remove the Christian Mardaites from Syria and Lebanon where they had been fighting the Arabs and preventing them from attacking the empire.

When Patriarch John Maroun heard about the Byzantine campaign, he decided to move his Chair in 685 to Kfarhay, east of Batroun (North Lebanon), following the Byzantine

Army attack on Saint Maroun's Monastery near the Assi River. Five hundred monks were killed by the Byzantines who chased the Maronite Patriarch and his followers to Amioun (North Lebanon).

The historical references do not mention that the Ehdenians confronted the Byzantines, but the Ehdenian ancient manuscript vaguely refers to the Ehdenians. The reality is that many Ehdenians marched in 694 to Amioun with other Maronite men to defend their religion and their Patriarch. The leader of the Maronite defenders was Ibrahim, the nephew of Patriarch John Maroun.

Despite the great support of the Jacobites to the Byzantines, Maurikian and Markianos were killed in Amioun. Maurikian was buried in the town. A church was built over his grave.

(الصليبي، 1992، ص 43)

Salibi claims that both Byzantine leaders were killed in Amioun. The reality is that Maurikian was killed in Amioun, and Markianos was injured in the battle and died later in Akkar.

Archbishop Youssef Al Dibs cited that the Byzantine king, Justinian, planned to send his army leader, Leontius, to Syria and Lebanon to apprehend Patriarch John Maroun and escort him to Rome, but Leontius replied that the Maronite Patriarch is protected by his own people and there is no simple way of capturing him and bringing him as a prisoner to Rome without a fierce war between the Byzantine Army and the Lebanese fighters.

Leontius admired the courage of the Maronite people since they had assisted him during his war against the Arabs. There is a sketchy description about that war, but we know that Leontius led, in 682, an army to fight the Arabs in Georgia and Armenia. The Maronite fighters may have helped Leontius in that war. In 692, Leontius "was defeated at Sebastopolis by the Arabs." (Laale, 2011, p. 352)

Justinian was outraged by Leontius' response and he threw him in jail. Then he sent Maurikian and Markianos with a huge army to Syria, and he declared that the Byzantine Army was going to confront the Arabs. Despite that declaration, Patriarch John

Maroun called his nephew, Ibrahim, to lead the resistance. Ibrahim moved to Syria with 12,000 fighters. They accompanied the Patriarch on his journey from Saint Maroun's Monastery, near the Assi River, to Smar Jbeil (Batroun).

After the Byzantine Army attacked Saint Maroun's Monastery and killed five hundred monks, Maurikian and Markianos moved to Tripoli. Their army set up their tents in Tripoli's plain. The citizens of Koura met them there and asked them for peace. They were offered peace for they obeyed the King's order which was, "Believe in Jesus' one nature." Then the Byzantine Army moved to the large area between Amioun and Ain Ikrin. The villagers offered the Byzantine Army food and asked them for a truce, so they can contact the Maronites in the higher mountains and convince them to lay their arms down.

During that period of time, Leontius led a coup against Justinian. Leontius became the new Byzantine king. Then, he sent a letter to the Maronites in Lebanon urging them to treat Maurikian, Markianos and their army as enemies. Following

this important letter, the Maronite fighters descended from the mountains and killed many Byzantine men, while other intruders fled away. Maurikian was killed. The citizens of Amioun buried him, and made July 26 his feast day.

Markianos was injured. His men carried him to Shwita, near Kobayyat in Akkar, where he was pronounced dead. The Byzantine soldiers built a temple dedicated to his soul.

(الدبس، 1982، ص 34-35)

The temple is still known as Markianos' Castle. An old manuscript written by Monsignor Michael Al Zaribi, mentions that the castle was still in good shape in 1870, and was mounted by a tower of 40 feet. The stones of that tower had been used to build Mohammad Bey Al Abboud's palace in Bireh of Akkar, Ali Agha Al Asaad's palace in Akkar Al Atika, and the Carmelite Monastery in Kobayyat (صابر، ج 1، 2001، ص 102).

However, the Ehdenians were not the only fighters in the Battle of 694 in Amioun. Hundreds of

villagers from all the Maronite mountains rushed to confront the Byzantine Army under one flag.

Justinian was planning to apply in Lebanon the belief in Jesus' one nature. He succeeded in Syria and in some parts of Lebanon. He could not achieve his goal in other parts of Lebanon due to the fierce Maronite resistance.

Meanwhile, Justinian's life was full of turmoil. As a result of his extravagances, he was deposed by Leontius. Leontius cut Justinian's nose and locked him in jail. Since then, Justinian was nicknamed "nose-less Justinian". The tyrant made his escape and regained his throne in 705, with the help of King Ferbelis of Bulgaria, but he was overthrown again in 711 by Philippius and killed. (New Century Cyclopedia of Names, V. 2, 1954, p. 2230)

6- Invasion of the Arabs:

After analyzing the concepts of the old manuscript, we cannot deny that Ehden was subjected to other invasions, especially after the death of Alexander the Great. The Arabs, who controlled Houran in Syria, invaded Lebanon in 74 BC. They

managed to expand their control to Bekaa Valley in Eastern Lebanon. They made Chalsis or Ain Al Jerr their capital city. Then they advanced to the highest mountains of North Lebanon and reached the Cedars' summits, before they descended towards the western coast. (تدمري، ج 1، 1978، ص 48)

The expansion from the Bekaa Valley to the coast would not have been possible without passing through Ehden.

Al Marada (Mardaites) and the Europeans (between 669 and 1367):

Al Marada was a group of courageous people who moved to Lebanon in 669. Arabs called them Al Jarajima, in relation to their town of Jarjouma in the Lucama Mountains. The Romans named them Mardaites (Strong Men).

Some historians wrote that Al Marada moved to Lebanon from Albania, or from Turkey, or even Iran. The Romans brought them to Lebanon to assist them in their fight against the Arabs. Other Arab historians argue that Al Marada were originally Persians. Their leaders were in jail, but King Kesra released them and sent them to support Sayf Ibn Dhi- Yazan, in Yemen (around 570), in order to get rid of them. From there they moved to Lebanon.

We think that Al Marada were from different origins. Some of them came from Jarjouma in the Lucama Mountains, others were Persians and Arabs, and some others were Romans, Albanians and Armenians.

Tournebize wrote about the great Armenian king, Tigran: "Tigran set his camp in front of the Roman Army, on the banks of Arsanias, which is one of Euphrates' branches. Lokolos crossed the river with no hesitation. When the first confrontation took place, the army of the Iberians and Al Marada was shattered. That caused the Armenian Army's defeat." (Tournebize, V1, 1910, p. 26)

Al Marada were fighting with Tigran, but this fact does not confirm some elderly Armenians' claim that Al Marada, and mostly Ehdenians, were originally Armenians.

There is another claim about the origin of Marada: They go back to the Emeriti era (around 1500 BC). Many wars had erupted between the Emeriti Prince of Kadesh and the Pharaoh of Egypt, Tohotmes the Third. Tohotmes managed to destroy Kadesh, the capital city of the Emeritis on the Assi River. Some Emeriti tribes moved to Kadisha Valley. They used to be called Amoro, Merdo ar Merto. The word "Marada" is one of those names (ضوّ، ج 3، 1977، ص 29).

In 855 BC, the king of Assyria, Shalmanasser the Third, defeated the Emeritis, the Phoenicians, the Hebrews and the Arabs in the famous battle of Karkar. The Emeritis again moved to Kadisha Valley.

The Arabs called the Emeritis "the brave hearts and the heroes", for they were involved in several battles against the bad and the Barbarians. They were also called "free people", "Jarajima" and "Marada" (حايك، 2003، ص 24).

Pomponius Mela (63 BC) states that the Emeritis settled in Ehden in the third century BC. He describes Ehden as the city of the Emeritis and the hometown of Enoch (Mela, 2009, p. 6-7).

During the Umayyad era, Al Marada caused a lot of trouble for the Arabs. They used to raid the coastal cities from their hideouts in the highest mountains of Lebanon. The Romans moved twelve thousand Mardaites to Armenia or to Albania, following an agreement with the Arabs.

Furthermore, the Umayyad Caliphate, Abd Al Malik, Son of Marwan (685-705) had to avoid the danger of Al Marada, and

he abided by their demand to pay them a sum of 1000 dinars a week.

Al Walid, Son of Abd Al Malik, renewed the truce with them. He prohibited Muslims from forcing Christians to abandon their religion. He permitted Christians to dress like Muslims and to not pay tax. Some Christians had been allowed to go to war with the Muslims.

We are not claiming that Al Marada were all Ehdenians. Al Marada resided in Jebbeh, Jbeil, Akoura and the Kesrawan Mountains. In fact, many Ehdenians descended from this group of people. Later on, the Crusades depended on Al Marada's help in their war against the Arabs.

The relationship between Al Marada and the Europeans goes back to the Byzantine era. In 960, when Nikephoros Phokas was appointed as the Byzantine Emperor, he retained Crete Island from the Arabs and took control of Cilicia and Cyprus. Then he sent his army in 966 to the Euphrates Basin, and the Christians in the Middle East supported the Byzantine Emperor against the

Arabs. In 969, he occupied Homs and Aleppo, and moved from Syria to Tripoli. He passed through Ehden with his army. The Ehdenians warmly welcomed the Byzantine Army.

The majority of the Maronite people in Lebanon opposed the Arabs' ruling, while other Christian sects did not refuse that ruling. The Jacobites' Patriarch of Antioch, Michael the Siriac, claimed that God, the Punisher, the One and the Conqueror, sent the sons of Ismail from the south to save us from the hands of the Romans (رنسيمان، ج 1، 1997، ص 38).

The Jacobites' Patriarch praised the Arabs and considered them as the saviors of his people.

Runciman claims that no one vowed to fight the Arabs except some tribes who resided in the high mountains, like the Jarajima in Lebanon and Taurus (رنسيمان، ج 1، 1997، ص 39).

The Maronites refused to be followers and to be protected by the Arabs, despite the fact that the Arabs offered them freedom of religion, but in return, the Maronites had to pay numerous taxes. The Arabs took control over several churches,

destroyed others and built mosques on their ruins. Some Muslim scholars granted the Christians the right to pray, but no churches were allowed to rise above mosques, and no ringing of church bells were permitted to reach Muslims' ears. Christians were obliged to wear specific clothes and were prohibited from riding horses or abusing Muslims. The Christians were not allowed to marry Muslim women or disrespect Islam, and they were obliged to be loyal to the Arab state.

The Ehdenians started helping the Crusades in 1099. The Crusades launched three attacks on Tripoli in 1099, 1102 and 1104.

In the beginning of the war, the Europeans set their camps in the east of Tripoli, on their way to Jerusalem. A large group of Syriac believers who resided in the higher Mount Lebanon, Jbeil, Batroun and Tripoli, went down from the Lebanese mountains to congratulate the Europeans and offer them their help. The Europeans welcomed their visitors warmly and employed them as guides to the best and safest routes in the huge mountains.

(دريان، 1919، ص 67)

When Raymond de Toulouse besieged Tripoli in 1102, he sought the Ehdenians' assistance. Tripoli surrendered after six years of siege. Tadmuri admits that one of the most important reasons behind the fall of Tripoli was the Christians' support. He wrote: "The Lebanese Christians played a great role in tightening the siege around Tripoli and its collapse later. If we had taken into consideration that they were residing in the highest areas in eastern and southern Tripoli, we would evaluate their contribution during the siege, for they offered the Crusades, from their high positions, an enormous help and they disabled any land support coming from Damascus to Tripoli. The Christians were also involved with the Crusades in heavy fighting for they were excellent in using bows and arrows. The Christians' role was not only limited to the Tripoli invasion, but they also helped to delay its return to the Muslims' hands during the following years.

(تدمري، ج 1، 1978، ص 326)

When the Crusades headed to Jerusalem, a group of men from Ehden and Jbeil moved to Akkar to offer their support to the

European Army. Some Ehdenians marched with the Crusades, to show them the roads and passages, until they arrived in Jerusalem. They also fought with them to occupy the Lebanese coastal cities, especially Beirut (in 1110). Beirut's people resisted the Crusades who were led by Raymond de Toulouse and King Baldwin. Nineteen Fatimid warships arrived from Egypt to support the citizens of Beirut. After two months of heavy clashes, Baldwin sought the help of other European princes and the Maronites of North Lebanon. Beirut surrendered to the Crusades on April 27, 1110 (مكّي، 1991، ص 119-120).

In 1111, a huge army from Iran and Iraq marched to Lebanon to fight against the Crusades. Al Marada confronted them near Caesarea and forced them to retreat (الشدياق،1954، ص 205).

In 1249, following the arrival of King Louis IX (Saint Louis de France) in Cyprus, a strong relationship had emerged between France and the Maronite people. The Maronites formed the main supporting force behind the European princes of Cyprus. King Louis recruited in his army many Lebanese villagers who invited him to visit their territories and offered to assist him.

In Egypt, Louis lost his army, and became a prisoner. He had to pay 400,000 pieces of gold in order to free himself and travel to Akko. There, he was surprised by the great assistance sent to him by the Maronite people. Many men and women moved to Akko to see the French king whom they nicknamed "the Sword of the World". Historians believe that the number of Maronite people who traveled from Lebanon to offer their assistance to King Louis reached 25,000 men.

(مراد، 1987، ص 61-63)

King Louis IX sent a letter to the Maronite Patriarch in which he promised to put the Maronite people under his protection and the protection of all the following French kings (Baudis, 1979, p. 147).

In 1264, the Mameluke king, Al Zaher, besieged Tripoli, but Al Marada ambushed his army. In 1266, King Al Zaher besieged Tyre in South Lebanon. The Mamelukes threw blood and animal intestines into the city water. Tyre surrendered. Then Al Zaher headed to Tripoli. Al Marada ambushed his army

again and claimed victory. He fled to Syria, where he tried to reorganise his shattered army and launch another attack on Lebanon, but he died in 1277 before he could achieve his goal.

Between 1311-1367, after the Crusades' defeat in Lebanon, they launched several attacks on Alexandria in Egypt and Tripoli in Lebanon. The majority of those attacks failed. In July 1365, the King of Cyprus, Pierre de Lusignan, ambushed Alexandria. He burnt it and apprehended 4000 prisoners, before returning to Cyprus with a huge quantity of gold, silk and spices. The Mamelukes captured all the European citizens in Damascus and seized 25 percent of their money, in order to rebuild Alexandria and establish a marine force to attack Cyprus. Among the prisoners was the Archbishop of Ehden, Yaacoub, who was then in Damascus, but the Archbishop managed to escape from prison.

In July 1367, de Lusignan ambushed Tripoli with fifteen thousand soldiers. The Mameluke soldiers were far from the city. Tripoli's citizens, along with some guards, confronted the

attackers who then withdrew and returned to Cyprus.

The attack on Tripoli would not have happened without the involvement of the Christians, who informed the Crusades that the Mameluke soldiers were then far from the city.

However, the relationship between Al Marada and the Crusades was not always pleasant. The Maronites sometimes vowed to act against the Europeans. When Shuja' Al Dawla, Son of Bazwash, the Prince of Aleppo, marched towards Tripoli in 1137, the Maronites handled him down the mountains' passages and marched with him to Tripoli. A battle took place near the fortress. The Prince of Tripoli, Pons, was killed, and many of his followers were captured. When Raymond the Second succeeded his father, Pons, he retaliated against the Maronites. He ambushed Mount Lebanon, captured all the men whom he considered traitors along with their women and jailed them in Tripoli's Fortress, exposing them to excruciating agony. (هاشم،2008، ص 257)

The Ehdenian Battles between the 13th and 17th Centuries:

1- The Battle of 1282:

The Mamelukes attempted to declare complete control over the Lebanese mountains. They supported the Jacobites in Jebbeh and used extreme military action against weaponless villagers.

The Mamelukes had a long history of oppression against the Maronite people. In 1282, they ransacked and destroyed some Christian villages in North Lebanon, displaced people and captured Patriarch Luke of Bnehran.

The attack on Ehden in 1282 was an act of revenge against Ehden and its citizens, for the Ehdenians had always helped the Crusades, particularly when the Mameluke leader, Al Zaher, attacked Tripoli. The Ehdenians ambushed his army and claimed victory. He fled to Hosn Al Akrad in Syria. There was another reason behind the assault on Ehden: The

Mameluke Caliphate, Al Mansour Kalaoun, selected some specific villages as the subjects of his military action, for he thought that these villages were loyal to the Crusades such as Ehden, Bkoufa, Hasroun, Hadath, Hawka and Kfarsaroun (which is a part of Diman). However, Kalaoun did not invade other villages that were not considered by him as loyal to the Europeans such as Kfarsghab, Hadchit, Bcharre and Bkarkasha.

(صابر، ج 3، 2002، ص 71)

Al Mansour Kalaoun gathered a huge army and moved to Lebanon. He encircled Tripoli, in which the Crusades were barracked. Tripoli was shelled for thirty three days until it surrendered. The Mameluke soldiers lurked into the city and only a few Crusades managed to spare their lives, for they fled to the small islands that face Al Mina. In a few hours, Tripoli was burnt to the ground.

The Maronite people from Kesrawan and high mountains rushed to Tripoli in order to help the Europeans. The Mameluke ruler of Damascus, Hosam Eddine Lagine, ordered his army to march again into Lebanon. He allowed his soldiers to enslave

the women and children they captured. Every soldier was offered one dinar for each Maronite he killed.

(الدويهي، 1976، ص 266)

Kalaoun realized that controlling Lebanon required one thing: the destruction of the greatest Maronite stronghold in Mount Lebanon, Ehden, for the most destructive attacks on the Mameluke Army were launched from Ehden and its surroundings.

The Mameluke Army rallied from Akkar and Dannieh towards Ehden, in which Patriarch Daniel Al Hadchiti was leading the Maronite's resistance. The Mamelukes' persistent attempts to enter the town failed. Their plan to invade Jebbeh was disrupted by the relentless fight of the Ehdenians and other citizens of Jebbeh.

We should mention here that the Maronites of Jebbet Al Mounaitara (Jbeil and its mountains) did not offer any help to the Ehdenians, due to some disagreements between the two Jebbehs. The Crusades did not support the Ehdenians and

Jebbeh's citizens, because the prince of Aleppo, Shuja' Al Dawla, Son of Bazwash, had passed through Jebbeh without any opposition (1137).

The Maronites did not resist Bazwash, for they were distressed by the Crusades' policies since the Crusades took control over lands and offered it to European princes. Due to that conduct, the Lebanese farmers lost their lands and were forced to pay hefty taxes to the princes.

The siege of Ehden lasted for forty days. The Mamelukes could not advance through the town. The last remedy for their failure was only a trick. They sent a group of men to Ehden to open a dialogue with Patriarch Daniel Al Hadchiti. Soon after, the Patriarch mysteriously disappeared. Nobody knew anything about his fate. He might have been killed and burnt.

The Mamelukes pelted Ehden with both medium and large rocks and explosives. The attackers used poisoned arrows to kill the defenders or force them to retreat, but the Ehdenians excelled in their fighting, and used all kinds of arms and

burning arrows. The Mamelukes strived to reach quickly the heart of the town where the fortress stood and where the leaders of Ehden had their headquarters.

Historians claim that the last phases of the battle took place in the Fortress of Al Hosn and in the middle of Ehden. The Mamelukes stormed Ehden from three directions and some of their soldiers encircled the inner fortress which was subjected to huge rocks and burnt arrows. In the middle of the day, the attackers managed to open two holes in the eastern and southern walls; hence they entered the heroes' fortress and slaughtered the defenders. One group of invaders had a specific mission: to capture women and children, kill the young people or enslave them. The fire remained alight in the houses for three days.

The Mamelukes cut off the heads of the defenders, displayed them on the bayonets of their spears and marched into Ehden's narrow streets in order to frighten the innocent citizens who surrendered to the enemies. Afterward,

the Mamelukes declared a total amnesty, but many civilians were killed in cold blood.

Soon after the Mameluke soldiers left the town, several Ehdenian men returned to extinguish the blazes. Those men had managed to break the siege and took refuge in the high mountains and in the depths of Kannoubine Valley.

Al Hariri, one of the most famous Arab historians wrote: “The Mamelukes could recover Tripoli from the Crusades’ hands only after they crushed their Maronite allies. The huge Mameluke Army marched to Jebbeh in the beginning of 1282. Patriarch Daniel, from Hadchit, led the resistance. The Ehdenians and other Maronite fighters stopped the advance of the Mameluke Army for more than forty days. The Mamelukes could occupy Ehden after using deception to apprehend the Patriarch.

(أبي عبد الله، ج2، 1997، ص 98)

After the Mamelukes’ call for dialogue and the disappearance of Patriarch Daniel Al Hadchiti or his death at the hands of the intruders, Ehden's resistance collapsed.

The Mamelukes killed tens of Ehdenians. They burnt houses, churches and fields. Then they moved to Hawka where they faced fierce resistance, but a traitor from Kfarsghab, Son of Sabha Al Kfarsghabi, advised the Mamelukes to overflow the village with Kadisha's water. After the village surrendered, the Mamelukes offered Son of Sabha some traditional Arabian clothes as an award for his cooperation. Later on, the traitor felt deeply regretful. He rebuilt the Monastery of Hawka.

Following the collapse of Hawka, the Mameluke Army attacked Hadath Al Jebbeh, with help from Mokaddam Salem. Hadath's citizens fled to a cave called Assi Al Hadath, which was a large cave with a water reservoir. The Mamelukes besieged the cave and built a tower to observe it. Many civilians died in the cave. Skeletons and clothes were still preserved in the cave until recent years.

Saber recounts the atrocity of Assi Al Hadath as the following: In August 20, the Mameluke Army arrived in Hadath. The villagers fled their homes to an immune cave in the slopes of Kadisha Valley. That cave was known as Assi Al Hadath. It had a water

reservoir. The attackers killed the civilians who failed to flee, and destroyed all the houses. Then they built a tower opposite to the cave in order to encircle it, and kept several soldiers in that tower. That siege lasted long until the civilians in the cave surrendered… In 1988, human corpses which were naturally preserved, and a wide range of tools, clothes, rags, pieces of glass and papers with writing were discovered in that cave.

(صابر، ج 3، 2002، ص 71)

Nassim Nawfal also described Ehden's battle, in which a few Ehdenians resisted the monumental Mameluke Army. But Nawfal claimed wrongly that King Al Zaher was then the Mameluke King. He wrote:"The Ehdenians confronted the Army of Al Zaher in Akbat Hairouna. Their hearts were harder than stones and steel. Against thousands of soldiers, the few Ehdenians fought for three days, and demonstrated excellent courage. The king almost lost his patience. On the fourth day, the Ehdenians moved their resistance to the middle of Ehden, to the fortress (the current site of Saint Georges' Church). Al Zaher's army besieged Ehden for forty days. The Ehdenians

continued their resistance until they had a little amount of food. Al Zaher brought in more troops in order to strengthen the pressure on the Ehdenians. Finally, Al Zaher* entered the town and killed many men, women and children. His army set the houses alight and destroyed the fortress. Later, the Ehdenians built Saint Georges' Church with the stones of the fortress.

(عن خازن، ج1، 1983، ص 86)

The battle of 1282 clearly showed the importance of Ehden as the greatest Maronite stronghold. After that battle, all the villages of Jebbeh surrendered to the Mamelukes. They burnt Kfarsaroun (part of Diman) and displaced tens of families.

Meanwhile, the Jacobites helped the Mamelukes in their atrocities. The Jacobites sought revenge for their defiance during

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***Nassim Nawfal states that Al Zaher was the leader of the Mamelukes, and so does Semaan Khazen. Al Zaher died five years earlier than the battle (He died in 1277). The Mamelukes' king who attacked Ehden was Al Mansour Kalaoun.**

the Battle of Amioun in 694, when the Maronites defied Maurikian and Markianos.

Following the disaster of Ehden, all the Lebanese cities and towns, from Tripoli to Akko in Palestine, surrendered. Ironically, Jebbet al Mounaitara (Jbeil and its mountains) admitted defeat. The Mamelukes ended the Maronite resistance in Lebanon for a while. In 1287, the Mameluke King, Kalaoun, led the Egyptian Army to Tripoli. The Syrian Army, which was loyal to Kalaoun, also marched to the city. They besieged the Crusades in Tripoli for thirty three days. The Crusades laid down their arms, but the Ehdenians, along with other Maronite fighters, attacked the Mamelukes from the high mountains and killed many of them.

Father Boutros Daou describes the battle of Ehden against the Mamelukes as one of the three summits of heroism in the entire history of Lebanon. The first summit, he said, was the resistance of Ehden and the Maronites of Kadisha against the Mamelukes' assault; the second summit was the victory of the Maronites of Jbeil, Batroun and Jebbeh over the Mamelukes' troops and their agents in Damascus and Tripoli; and the third summit of bravery

was the alliance between the Druze and the Christians of Kesrawan in 1305, to resist the barbarian attack of the Mamelukes and their agents (ضوّ، ج 3، 1977، ص 541).

The Mamelukes invaded Palestine, Syria and Turkey, but they were confronted by a small amount of men around Ehden. This shows the excellent heroism of the Ehdenians.

The war between the Mamelukes and the Maronite people had never ended. After the Crusades' attack on Alexandria, in 1365, the Mamelukes captured several Maronite religious leaders and locked them up in Damascus. One of those religious leaders was Archbishop Yaakoub from Ehden, but he managed to flee. The Mamelukes also chased the Maronite Patriarch, Gebrael, to his hideout in his village, Hjoula - Jbeil. They captured him and took him to Tripoli where they burnt him near the Tinal Mosque in Bab Al Ramel.

Following many military actions against the Maronite people, they lost security and their numbers began to decline. Many of them moved from cities to settle in high villages... They also

faced poverty and misery (هاشم،2008، ص 29).

2-The Uprising against the Jacobites (1489):

In the middle of the 15th century, many foreigners moved to Lebanon. One of them was a Jacobite priest called Jacob (from Ethiopia) who moved with his colleagues to Ehden and resided in Saint Jacob's Church, hence, this church is well known as Saint Yaacoub's-Al Ahbash (فهد، 1990، ص 21).

The Jacobites were members of a Syriac sect who believed that Jesus Christ has only one nature. The Jacobites were well known for their hatred against the Maronite people and their monks, and they used to pronounce the word "Maronite" with mockery. (فهد، ج 12، 1977، ص 20)

It is surprising how Fouad Kazan praises the Jacobites as founders of churches, monasteries and schools. He claims that their influence swept Jebbeh and they frightened the Maronite clergy, for many Maronites left their Church and joined the Jacobites (قازان، مج 1، 1972، ص 225).

The Jacobites appointed Noah from Bkoufa as their Archbishop and they named him "the Archbishop of Phoenicia".

Noah moved to Lebanon from Jerusalem. He resided in Ban, near Bkoufa. He was an uneducated priest. He followed the principles of a Jacobite preacher, Dioscurus. Dioscurus taught Noah reading and writing, and selected him to be a priest and called him Korillos. Another man, Son of Shaaban, joined Noah. Son of Shaaban was Roman, Maronite then Jacobite. He resided in Faradis' Monastery with many other Jacobites. They were loyal to Noah and they established schools for boys and girls.

The Maronite Archbishop of Ehden, Yaacoub Al Ehdeni, tried to preach to the Jacobites and refuted their teachings. They accordingly fled Ehden to Hadchit and resided there, under the protection of Sheikh Georges Al Soufi and Moukaddam Abd El Moun'em.

Abd El Moun'em plotted against the Ehdenians, since they forced the Jacobites to leave Ehden. Meanwhile, the Maronite Patriarch, Boutros Al Hadthi, asked the Archbishop of Ehden,

Yaacoub, to deter the Jacobites from Jebbeh. Yaacoub tried hard to limit the presence of Jacobites in the Sacred Valley.

Abd El Moun'em threatened the Ehdenians and warned them to leave their town. They refused to do so and replied to him saying: "We will defend our land and religion to the last standing man." He sought help from the leaders of Dannieh and the Zaazoua family of Bchennata. They all together decided to attack Ehden from the east and north.

The Ehdenians set two traps, one in Hmaina and the other near Saint Sarkis' spring. The genius Ehdenian fighters released the water of Saint Sarkis' spring and all the water of Bkoufa towards their lands. When the armed men approached Ehden, their horses became caught in mud and water. The Ehdenian men attacked them from Hmaina. They killed dozens of them and chased the others to Toula.

Another story about the bravery of the Ehdenians and the Maronite leaders in general is told by Patriarch Douaihi. The greatest Lebanese historian claims that the Maronite fighters

were divided into four groups. The first group was deployed near Al Bouaib, east of Ehden, and was ordered to pretend defeat in front of the enemies. Another group was deployed under Our Lady of Al Hosn's. The third and fourth groups took positions between Ehden and the field of Toula. When the first group pretended defeat, the enemies proceeded towards the field of Toula. Here, the Ehdenians and their allies set the trap. They ambushed the attackers and killed them all. Only two men managed to flee the battle and delivered the news to Dannieh and Tripoli (الدويهي، 1976، ص 364-365).

The bodies of the attackers are still buried in an unknown place near Toula. Douaihi argues that the Christian fighters gathered the bodies and the horses of their victims, buried them in a cave and sealed the entrance of that cave. Then, they brought 2000 bodies from the field of Toula to the pathway and overturned the field to erase any trace of the battle.

(الدويهي، 1976، ص365)

After defeating the Jacobites, the Ehdenians built another church in the name of the Virgin Mary. They called it "Saint of Hara's".

When Abd El Moun’em heard about his fighters' defeat, he fled to Bcharre.

The citizens of the lower part of Bkoufa were Jacobites. The Ehdenians launched a fierce attack on them and destroyed their monastery and many homes.

Anwar Saber argues that when the Ehdenians attacked Bkoufa, they defeated the Jacobites and destroyed their houses and their monastery, which was the headquarters of their religious leaders. The Ehdenians prevented anyone from reconstructing the village. Saber also claims that the Maronite people of Bkoufa were not safe from the anger of the Ehdenians. Hence, the Maronites decided to move with their Jacobite relatives to Kfarhawra and other villages. The truth is that the Ehdenians did not harm the Maronite people or attack their properties. The Maronites of Bkoufa wanted to voluntarily leave the village with their relatives. Saber admits that Bkoufa became deserted since the end of the 15th century, despite that several houses were still standing until the 16th century. They were in fact empty.

(صابر، ج 2 ،2002، ص 113-114)

Here we can ask: Why did the Ehdenians leave some houses standing in Bkoufa? The answer is: These very houses were owned by Maronites. These houses stayed immaculate for a century, and the Ehdenians did not destroy or seize these houses. This reality refutes Saber's claim that the Maronites of Bkoufa were not safe from the anger of the Ehdenians.

Depicting the Ehdenians as aggressive corresponds to traditional stories and false claims. The reality is that the people of Ehden are peaceful. They lived in the snowy mountains for hundreds of years and they did not invade any of the numerous coastal villages. Some of those villages are not distant from Ehden. Meanwhile, neighbouring villages such as Aitou, Kfarsghab, Blouza, Toula and Hawka have never complained against the Ehdenians' misconduct.

Following Bkoufa's aftermath, the Jacobites left Jebbeh for good. The Maronite flag has risen on the whole area, but only a few Jacobites remained in Bcharre for a while. In 1493, Gebrael, Son of Al Kila'i, a Maronite monk from Lehfed, returned from

Europe. He wrote a poem to Bcharre saying:

وإنتِ مِــن شــارعلــيـــكِ   حتّى دخَـــــل يعقوب فيكِ؟

مـــــن تجديفه حـــلّ عليكِ   غـضـب الله فــــي ذاك الآن

فـــإذاً تُـــوبِـي يـــا حُـــــرّه   واطــردي الغُربـــا إلــى برّا

ويـــعــقـوب جسمــــه يتْهرّى   ومـارون اقبليه في الأحضان.

(And you (Bcharre), who advised you

To let Jacob interfere in your affair?

Because of his blasphemy, you were

Subject to God's wrath

Turn away from sin, O free village,

And banish the strangers.

Let the body of Jacob fray,

And accept Saint Maroun in your lap.)

We believe that the Jacobites left Jebbeh completely in 1495,

following the death of Mokaddam Abd El Moun'em. He was succeeded by his son, Jamal Al Din, who was an excellent man. His wife rebuilt Saint Hoshab's Church in Bka'kafra.

Archbishop Youssef Al Dibs wrote about the circumstances that led to the battle of 1489, saying that in 1487, the conflict erupted in Lebanon's mountain because of Moukaddam Abd El Moun'em Ayoub who learned reading, during the ruling of his uncle, Moukaddam Rizkallah, through the instruction of a Jacobite priest. Following the death of his uncle, Abd El Moun'em succeeded him. A trader named Moussa, Son of Atsha, used to visit Abd El Moun'em frequently. The trader was overwhelmed by the idea of Jesus' one nature. He offered Abd El Moun'em gifts. In return, Abd El Moun'em admired the principles of the Jacobites and built for them a church, by the name of Saint Barsoum's. The church was next to his house.

During that period of time, a priest called Noah from Bkoufa arrived from Jerusalem and resided in Faradis, which was a part of Ban's lands. Noah was a Jacobite. He lured some uneducated people, and convinced them to learn through his instruction and

become priests… They started drawing the sign of the Cross with only one finger, as an indication of Jesus' one nature… When the Maronite Patriarch, Boutros Al Hadthi, heard about the behavior of the Jacobites in Jebbeh, he sent them priests and Archbishops to change their religious manners. They refused to listen, encouraged by the protection of Moukaddam Abd El Moun'em and the foreigners who arrived from Sadad in Syria, Ethiopia and Nablus. The conflict became more and more critical, especially when Moukaddam Abd El Moun'em threatened those who opposed the Jacobites with exile and confiscation of their properties (الدبس، 1982، ص 160).

Fortunately, the bravery of the Ehdenians disrupted the satanic plan of Abd El Moun'em and his followers, and Jebbeh was freed from the Jacobites for good.

Patriarch Estephanos Douaihi claims that some Jacobites fled to Hardine (Batroun), some to Kfarhawra (near Zagharta), the others fled by sea to Cyprus. Father Jacob (The Jacobites' leader) and his followers moved to Saint Moussa's between Damascus and Al Nabk in Syria (الدويهي، 1976، ص 361).

3-The Blaze of 1586:

In 1586, Ehden was burnt. There is no clear reference about that incident, but a Syriac manuscript, preserved in the National Library of Paris, mentioned the blaze.

We may establish a connection between the Blaze of Ehden and the political situation in Lebanon in the middle of the 16^{th} century, when the relationship between the Maan family and the Ottomans was terrible. The Maans tried to keep some sort of self-ruling in Lebanon, and opposed the Turk's full domination.

The Ehdenians were loyal to the Maan family, for they always hated the Ottomans and preserved their respect to Korkomaz, the Prince of Maan, who admired the Christians.

On the other hand, North Lebanon was suffering under the ruling of Youssef Sayfa, who was loyal to the Ottomans. Sayfa managed to expand his control from Akkar to Batroun. Moreover, he accused Prince Korkomaz of attacking, in Akkar, a convoy transporting a large sum of taxes to Istanbul. The Ottomans sent their army to Lebanon to capture Korkomaz,

who fled to Niha's fortress, and was killed there in 1585. Ehden was burnt in the same bleak period.

Furthermore, burning villages and towns was very common during the Ottomans' occupation of Lebanon. In 1524, they launched a huge military operation on the Shouf district, in which they burnt thirty villages to the ground.

(زيادة، 1993، ص 293)

Meanwhile, some traditional speculation suggests that the blaze may have been caused by neighbouring villagers while the Ehdenians were in Zagharta.

(راجع بركات، 2011، ص 146)

4-The Battle of Zagharta (1676):

Hassan Pasha was appointed by the Ottomans as the ruler of Tripoli. He chose Baz, Son of Abi Raad, to be the governor of the Batroun district and Abou Karam Al Ehdeni to be the governor of Jebbet Bcharre. Hassan Pasha also sent his men to all the northern areas to oppose the Hamadis.

The Hamadis migrated to Lebanon in 1450 from Bukhara in Azerbaijan. Their leader, Hamadi, had a history of conflict with the Persian rulers. After arriving in Lebanon, Hamadi resided in Houssain then Kehmez in Kesrawan. The Hamadis widened their presence into Jebbet Al Mounaitara and Almat Valley (Jbeil region). The sons of Hamadi were appointed as the rulers of Jebbet Bcharre, Dannieh and Hermel. Then they took control over the Batroun and Jbeil areas. Their control reached Akkar. In the 15th century, the Hamadis pushed the Christians away to the Lebanese coast and South Lebanon. In the 16th century, the Druze of Mount Lebanon formed an alliance with the Maronite people. The Turks supported the new alliance in order to limit the Hamadis' control, but the Hamadis formed a coalition with the Harfouche family in the Bekaa Valley. Lebanon experienced two centuries of conflicts and anarchy. In 1654, Ahmad Hamadi became the governor of Jebbeh.

The great conflict between the Ehdenians and the Hamadi family erupted when Sheikh Hussein Hamadi, Son of Ahmad Hamadi, set an ambush for Baz, Son of Abi Raad, in Lehfed

(Jbeil) and assassinated him. Then, he sent his men to Jebbet Bcharre. They camouflaged in Hairouna Valley to kill Sheikh Abou Karam, who was in Zagharta.

Deacon Antoine, the brother of Ehden's Archbishop, was detained by the Hamadis in Hairouna and killed. Following this vicious crime, the people of the area were confused and shattered.

On October 17, 1676, Sheikh Hussein Hamadi descended with thirty horsemen to Zagharta to assassinate Abou Karam who was asleep. A clash erupted between the attackers and seven of Abou Karam's men. The Hamadis could not defeat the Ehdenians and they failed to kill Abou Karam, so they retreated with humiliation. Patriarch Estephanos Douaihi wrote that two men, Abd Al Kader, the Sheikh of Aardat, and Hage Mohammad Katergi Agha, witnessed Saint Mary of Zagharta over the tower protecting the Ehdenians with her hands and banishing the offenders (الدويهي، 1976، ص 563).

The ruler of Tripoli, Hassan Pasha, was very upset by the

conduct of the Hamadis. He led a military operation to attack their strongholds in the Jbeil areas. In return, the Hamadis wreaked havoc in Almat, Torzayya, Ehmej, Jaj, lassa and other villages around Jbeil and Batroun. They set houses ablaze, seized domestic animals and killed many innocent people.

Between 1692 -1800:

1-Sheikh Michael Nahlous Al Ehdeni (1692-1704):

In 1692, the governor of Tripoli, Ali Pasha, appointed Sheikh Michael Nahlous Al Ehdeni as the ruler of Jebbeh.

Sheikh Nahlous was born in Ehden. He was the nephew of Sheikh Abou Karam, Son of Bechara, who was the ruler of Jebbeh between 1674 -1677. Sheikh Nahlous was involved in a long struggle against the Hamadis.

In 1750, the Hamadis' ruling of Jebbeh became unbearable. The Hamadis considered the Maronite people as servants who worked for their masters, and begged for food and clothes. The Hamadis labeled the Maronite Church with bitter descriptions and they abused the Maronite clergy. In fact, they decided, with the Harfouche family, to devastate the Maronite sect.

The Hamadis demolished the churches and built mosques instead. They prohibited Zagharta's citizens from ringing their

churches' bells. They allowed them to use only wooden bells. Before the Sunday mass, one Maronite man used to walk in the village, carrying a wooden bell and a stick to call people to the mass. Furthermore, the Maronite people were banned from building domes over their churches.

In 1691, the governor of Tripoli, Mohammad Pasha, supported the Hamadis, but in a few months another ruler, Ali Pasha, was appointed. He tried to weaken the Hamadis and appointed Sheikh Michael Nahlous as the ruler of Ehden and Jebbeh. Meanwhile, an order was sent from Istanbul to Tripoli's governor, urging him to capture the Hamadi leaders and prevent them from assaulting the poor people.

The order read: "The people of Koura and Dannieh in Tripoli's province came to us and complained against the villains who live near their boundaries and who have been assaulting them during the several previous years. The civilians of those two areas don't receive any kind of protection. Day after day, the Hamadis will expand their control on the whole province. Moreover, the villains attacked Koura, killed ten people, robbed

money and seized crops. Hence, the citizens and their families are living with famine and disrespect. Capture the tyrants and stop their assaults on the poor people."

(حمادة، مج 2، 2008، ص 169)

During that period of time, Zagharta was not fully owned by the Ehdenians. The Hamadis used to own some parts of the town, but Sheikh Nahlous declared full control of Zagharta and ordered the citizens of Zagharta to freely practice their religion without any fear.

The villagers in Lebanon recalled two poetry verses honouring the courage of Sheikh Nahlous:

يحرز دينَك يا نحلوس   حميت الجبّه بالدبّـوس

جــامع رشعين هدّيتو   وبزغرتـــا دقّ الناقــوس

(God bless you Nahlous,

You protected Jebbeh with your stick,

You demolished Rash'in's mosque,

Hence, the church's bell rang in Zagharta.)

Rash'in is a little village near Zagharta. Mohammad Pasha Al Arnaout had built a palace and a mosque in that village in 1642, but Sheikh Nahlous demolished the mosque and repelled the Hamadis from all the villages that surround Zagharta. Sheikh Nahlous demolished all the mosques that were built by the Hamadis and he used their stones to rebuild the old churches that were destroyed by the Hamadi leaders. Many ancient churches in Zagharta and nearby villages were built in Sheikh Nahlous' era.

Unfortunately, Sheikh Nahlous was assassinated while he was sleeping in a house in Dannieh by Son of Al Shakrani (1704), a man loyal to the Hamadis.

The killing of Sheikh Michael Nahlous happened after he was appointed by the governor of Tripoli to receive the tax money from Dannieh. Some villagers invited him to sleep in one of their houses. Son of Al Shakrani was a farmer. He woke up at night and lit a lamp to see Sheikh Michael Nahlous. He fired on him with a primitive rifle and fled the house. It was clear that

Son of Al Shakrani conspired to kill Sheikh Nahlous with the house's owners. No one from the neighbourhood vowed to pursue the Son of Al Shakrani.

2- Sheikh Gerges Boulos Douaihi -
The Battle of Sheikh's Mill (1757):

Sheikh Gerges Boulos Douaihi was a well known leader of Jebbeh and Ehden.

Boutros Wehbe Douaihi described Sheikh Gerges Boulos Douaihi as "the liberator of Ehden". He wrote: Sheikh Gerges Boulos Douaihi was a dignitary and brave man in Jebbeh. He was also a great leader in his hometown.

(الدويهي، 2002، ص 339).

It was well known that Sheikh Gerges Boulos Douaihi liberated Ehden from the harsh ruling of the Hamadi family. The Hamadis were controlling the eastern parts of Ehden, between Al Midan and Saint Sarkis' spring. Without Sheikh Gerges' bravery and heroism, Ehden would have been a different town.

Sheikh Gerges Boulos Douaihi received a petition from Osman Pasha, the governor of Tripoli and bitter enemy of the Hamadis, to confront the sons of Ahmad Hamadi and drive them away from Ehden. In return, the governor promised that he would grant Sheikh Gerges Boulos Douaihi complete control over Ehden.

Sheikh Gerges called some of his relatives and other men from Ehden. A secret meeting was held in Ju'it Valley, behind Our Lady of the Fortress' Church in Ehden, where a call for a revolution against the Hamadis was raised. The meeting coincided with the arrival of two Hamadi leaders with their men to Jebbeh. Their mission was to capture the Maronite Archbishop, Joakim, and exile him to Baalbek. The Maronite fighters jumped to their arm to defend their Archbishop and killed all the attackers. The Maronite men returned to Saint Georges' in Ehden and took an oath before the Holy Bread not to lay their arms before the liberation of their land. The Hamadis and the Harfouche family were surprised by this fierce revolution.

The Ehdenians, led by Sheikh Gerges Boulos Douaihi, attacked the Hamadis in Ehden. A great battle erupted near Sheikh's Mill, and the Ehdenians managed to free their town from the Hamadis, hence regaining control over Ehden.

The area currently known as "Harat Mar Boutros" was controlled by the Hamadis. Sheikh Gerges built his house in that area and called his relatives to build their houses nearby. There was no church in that part of Ehden. He constructed the Church of Saint Peter and Paul to honour his father, Boulos.

The governor of Tripoli awarded Sheikh Gerges Boulos Douaihi and appointed him as Ehden's first ruler. Sheikh Gerges Boulos Douaihi died in 1779. His body rests in peace under the Church of Saint Peter and Paul.

3-The Uprising against the Hamadis (1759):

After a long period of oppression at the hands of the Hamadis, the Ehdenians declared war against them again in 1759.

The history of Zagharta is sadly labeled with many crimes that

the Hamadis committed against the Ehdenians. The Hamadis sent Mohammad Al Arak to kill the Ehdenian ruler of Jebbeh, Sheikh Hanna Bou Dib (1641-1643). During the ruling of Sheikh Abou Karam, Son of Bechara, on Jebbeh (1674-1677), Sheikh Housain Ahmad Hamadi assasinated, in Hairouna Valley, Deacon Antoine Douaihi, who was on his way to Ehden one night. Deacon Antoine was the brother of Ehden's Archbishop Sarkis Douaihi.

In 1704, Issa Hamadi slapped the greatest Patriarch, Estephanos Douaihi, on his face. The Patriarch was then an old man. He was forced, on several occasions, to leave his Patriarchal Chair and flee to Kesrawan.

In 1700, Patriarch Douaihi sent a letter to the French King, Louis the Fourteenth, to inform him about the Maronites' suffering.

Douaihi quoted that the Hamadis imposed taxes on priests, monks, women, orphans, widows and children... The Hamadis captured men and kids, and they hanged women by their

breasts on trees. Then, Patriarch Douaihi described how the Maronite people were shattered and obliged to move to some foreign countries, and how the Hamadis intimidated the Patriarch himself. He was forced to camouflage himself in ordinary clothes and hide in valleys to protect himself from their hands (Douaihi and Douaihi, 2007, p.p. 157-158).

In 1755, the Hamadis took control over Jebbeh and Ehden. There were two groups of Hamadis: The first group consisted of Hussein Al Issa Hamadi, Asaad Moussa Hamadi, Abd Al Malik Hamadi and his son, Jahjah. They governed Ehden. The second group consisted of Abi Hussein Saleh Hamadi, Soulaiman Abi Kassem Hamadi, Hassan Abi Nassif Hamadi and the son of Nassr Hamadi. They took control over Bcharre and Hasroun.

Father Francis Rahme wrote that the Hamadis divided Ehden and Jebbeh areas as the following:

- Hussein Hamadi: Bcharre, Kannoubine, Aitou and Baz'oun.

- Asaad Abou Moussa Hamadi: Hasroun, Blaouza, Kfarsghab, Toula, Karmsaddeh and Raskifa.

- Abou Nassif Hamadi: Ehden.

- Abou Hussein Saleh Hamadi: Aintourine, Mazra'et Al Teffah, Bnash'i, Knat, Barhalioun, Hamatoura, Kfarsaroun, and Bait Z'aiter.

- Abou Kassem Hamadi: Kozhaya's Monastery, Hadchit and Bka'kafra (رحمه، 1956، ص 350).

The citizens of Ehden, Bcharre and Hasroun signed an agreement with the Hamadis. The Hamadis promised not to interfere in the religious issues and matters of honour, but the Hamadis disrespected the agreement. One day, a Hamadi man admired a girl from Bcharre and tried to convince her to go with him. She refused and abused him. He attempted to kidnap her. The citizens of Bcharre were attending the mass at Saint Saba's Church. They heard the girl screaming and they rushed to save her. They apprehended the man, and the brothers of the girl beheaded him. After ten days, the Hamadis attacked Bcharre to avenge the killing of their relative, but Bcharre's fighters repelled them.

The Hamadis also wanted to kill the leaders of Ehden and Jebbeh: Sheikh Hanna Daher Keirouz and Sheikh Issa Al Khoury Rahme from Bcharre, Sheikh Gerges Boulos Douaihi from Ehden and Sheikh Abou Soulaiman Awwad from Hasroun. The Hamadis ambushed the leaders while they were leaving a meeting. The Hamadis' ambush failed, but they managed to kill Sheikh Abi Daher of Hadchit. Then, they attacked Blaouza and killed a man and a woman along with their son while they were sleeping on the top of their houses. From Blaouza, the Hamadis moved to Aintourine where they killed a farmer in his field and burnt his body. They also killed another blind man from Hadchit.

But the main reason behind the uprising of the Ehdenians against the Hamadis in 1759 was a plot prepared by the Hamadis to kill the Archbishop of Ehden, Joachim Yammine. They sent Ahmad Abd Al Malik Hamadi and Hassan Abi Nassif Hamadi to capture the Archbishop or assassinate him.

The Archbishop wrote to the governor of Damascus, complaining about the harshness of the Hamadis. The governor

sent a letter to the Archbishop. He permitted the Ehdenians to confront the Hamadis and put an end to their ruling over Jebbeh.

On October 7, 1759, Archbishop Yammine presided over a mass in Ehden and urged his followers to get ready for the battle against Ahmad Hamadi and his followers.

The Hamadis attempted to attack Ehden during the mass. Some brave Ehdenian men, Bamin Yammine, Issa Yammine, Jbeir Karam, Antonios Ke'dou, Youssef Basim, Zakhia Chalhoub and Jabbour Azizi guarded the church. They saw the Hamadis attacking from the eastern district, the higher district near Al Midan, and Al Akaibeh.

The Ehdenians rushed heartily to tackle their enemies. Jbeir Karam, Youssef Basim and Zakhia Chalhoub confronted the armed Hamadis who attacked from the east. Bamin Yammine and Issa Yammine tackled another group near Al Midan.

Issa Yammine punched, with a stick, the leader of the Hamadis, Hassan Abou Nassif. Abou Nassif's blood splashed onto the wall

of Zakhia Chalhoub's house, while Bamin Yammine killed another leader, Ahmad Abd Al Malik, near Saint Mama's. Antonios Ke'dou and Youssef Basim ambushed the third group of men near Al Akaibeh.

The Ehdenian fighters, who were attending the mass, joined their colleagues. They pushed the Hamadis out of Ehden and chased them to Kannoubine. There, they captured one Hamadi leader. They escorted him to Ehden, where they killed him in front of Archbishop Yammine's house.

The next day, Ehden became packed with local fighters and volunteers from neighbouring villages, while the leaders, Sheikh Gerges Boulos Douaihi, Sheikh Hanna Daher Keirouz, Sheikh Issa Al Khoury Rahme, Sheikh Abou Soulaiman Awwad, Sheikh Abou Youssef Elias from Kfarsghab and Sheikh Abou Khattar Chidiac from Aintourine had a brief meeting and determined to appoint themselves as rulers of Jebbeh and Ehden instead of the Hamadis.

The Maronite leaders moved quickly to Tripoli to inform the

governor, Ismail Al Kargi, about their decision to rule their territories and they agreed to pay a huge amount of money in return. They appointed three military leaders: Sheikh Bechara Karam from Ehden, Sheikh Abou Daher Al Farz from Bcharre and Abou Elias Al Afreet from Hasroun. The mission of the three military leaders was to protect the order and oppose any attempt by the Hamadis to return to Jebbeh or Ehden.

4-Sheikh Bechara Karam (1757-1763) and the Hamadis:

Bechara Karam was one of three military leaders who were appointed by the rulers of Jebbeh in 1757.

Youssef Debs, who wrote about that period of time, argues that the Sheikhs of the Hamadis took control over Jbeil, Batroun and Jebbeh... They practiced some sort of justice and righteousness, but their sons practiced robbery, injustice and killing. Between 1750 and 1759, they disrupted the villagers' lives and killed many innocent people.

The ruler of Tripoli, Osman Pasha Al Karaji, supported the Maronite leaders of Ehden and Jebbeh and helped them

confront the Hamadis who used to wreak havoc in Zagharta neighbourhoods and some areas of Tripoli.

(الدبس، 1982، ص 274)

In 1761, the Hamadis attacked Bcharre. They killed many civilians and destroyed homes.

The citizens of Bcharre and Hasroun called their Ehdenian neighbours for help. Sheikh Bechara Karam rushed with his men from Ehden and ambushed the Hamadi attackers.

The Battle of Bcharre lasted for eight hours. The Ehdenians forced the Hamadis again to leave Jebbeh. The local fighters killed twelve attackers and chased the others to the highest mountains of Hasroun.

Sheikh Bechara Karam killed two Hamadi leaders. One of them was Sheikh Mokdad, while the Ehdenians lost only one man: Youssef Jbeir Karam.

Issam Karam describes the Battle of 1761 as the following: Bcharre had been attacked by a thousand heavily

armed fighters. The Maronites were surprised by this huge assault, but their religious leaders, particularly Patriarch Toubia Al Khazen (1756-1766), gathered the Maronite people in the churches and encouraged them to resist, with the protection of the Virgin Mary and the support of the Dannieh governor, Sheikh Nassif Raad. The Maronite people claimed victory under the leadership of Sheikh Bechara Karam. That battle lasted for eight hours. Father Goddard recounts that, according to elders, in the sunset of that day, the sky was full of clouds and a rainbow emerged over the battlefield, from which a bright white light appeared, with a lady holding a sword and hitting the ground with it. The Maronite fighters screamed, "This is the Virgin Mary! This is the Virgin Mary... She is here to protect us!" The Hamadi fighters were stunned by this view. They were frightened by the Virgin Mary. They fled the battlefield, and Jebbeh had been liberated (كرم، 2006، ص 41- 43).

Following this battle, Sheikh Bechara Karam became the political and military leader of Jebbeh.

In 1763, the Hamadis tried again to attack Jebbeh, but Sheikh Bechara Karam and his men resisted them.

One day, Sheikh Bechara was heading back to Ehden with a few of his men. The Hamadis surprised them from behind near Al Maghaira. Sheikh Bechara was killed along with six of his men, namely Rizkallah Frangie, Jibrin Mouawad, Ibrahim Al Khoury Abboud, Daoud Bou Moussa and his cousin Issa Bou Moussa. The sixth victim was an unknown man from Dannieh.

5- Sheikh Youssef Francis Karam and the Battle of 1771:

Sheikh Youssef Francis Karam was born in Tripoli. When he moved to Ehden in 1771, the leadership of Ehden was held by Youssef Boulos Douaihi, but Sheikh Youssef Francis Karam was considered a local leader until he inherited the leadership of Ehden, following the death of Sheikh Youssef Boulos Douaihi in 1788.

There is only a sketchy description of the Battle of 1771. Some clashes erupted in Akoura, Dar B'ashtar and Kalamoun between Prince Bashir Haidar Al Shehabi (aka the Fat) and the Hamadis.

Issa Iskandar Al Maalouf describes the Battle of 1771 as the following:

The Hamadis' Sheikhs unified their forces against Prince Bashir Haidar Al Shehabi in Akoura. The war erupted and lasted from sunrise to sunset. Jebbet Bcharre's men supported Prince Bashir and defeated the Hamadis who lost eight men while Bashir lost three fighters. The next day, another group of fighters arrived from Jebbeh to support Prince Bashir. The Hamadis fled with their families from Jebbet Al Mounaitara and Almat Valley to Dar B'ashtar in Koura. Jebbeh's fighters waited for them in Hamatoura, near Kosba... Sheikh Asaad Al Khoury, who was a brilliant leader in Prince Bashir's army in Beirut, rushed to Dar B'ashtar with his Moroccan soldiers and attacked the Hamadis. The Hamadis lost two men while fifteen Moroccans were killed. Sheikh Asaad Al Khoury returned to Bziza and contacted Jebbeh's fighters in Hamatoura. They met him in Bziza with other fighters from Akoura. The Hamadis fled again to the coast. Sheikh Asaad Al Khoury chased them to Enfeh, then to Kalamoun. About a hundred Hamadis were killed.

Kalamoun's citizens urged Sheikh Asaad to stop fighting. The Hamadis moved to Tripoli, then to Hermel.

(المعلوف، 2003، ص 254 – 255)

The leaders of Ehden, Jebbeh, Jbeil and Batroun supported Prince Bashir's army. Sheikh Youssef Francis Karam and the Ehdenians were the first fighters from North Lebanon to arrive in Akoura to fight with Prince Bashir.

The Battle of 1771 was the last battle against the Hamadis, who resided in Eastern Lebanon and kept ambushing the Maronite villages. Before that year, the large area between Ehden and Zagharta was dominated by Shiite villages or Maronite-Shiite villages. Issam Khalifeh, who studied the Ottoman Archive, quoted that many pure Shiite villages and mixed villages had existed (خليفة، 1996، ص 80). This means that the demographic shape of Zawyeh changed after 1771.

6-Sheikh Youssef Boulos Douaihi (1779-1788)

Supports Prince Youssef Shehab:

Sheikh Youssef Boulos Douaihi was the son of Sheikh Gerges Boulos Douaihi. He inherited the leadership after the death of his father in 1779. Sheikh Youssef was a well known hero.

In 1788, the war erupted between Prince Youssef Melhem Shehab and Ahmad Pasha Al Jazzar (the Butcher), who was then the governor of Akko.

Al Jazzar endorsed Bashir (the Great) as the ruler of the Shouf district and Kesrawan, and offered him a thousand men and arms to fight against Prince Youssef Melhem Shehab who fled to Aley, Hammana, Mtein, Akoura then Lehfed (Jbeil), where he gathered some Maronite fighters and demanded the help of Jebbeh and Ehden's leaders.

Sheikh Youssef Boulos Douaihi vowed to help Prince Youssef. He moved with his Ehdenian men to the Mihal Valley, between Ehmej and La'lou' (Laklouk), and joined the men of Prince Youssef Shehab.

The resistance against Prince Bashir's army was excellent, but Bashir had the largest number of men and the unlimited support of Ahmad Pasha Al Jazzar.

The Ehdenians fought heroically, yet their leader Sheikh Youssef Boulos Douaihi was killed.

Prince Youssef Shehab fled to Ehden with the remaining Ehdenian men, but the governor of Tripoli ordered him to head to the Bekaa Valley. Prince Youssef fled to Tarayya and kept moving from village to village until he was killed by Al Jazzar himself (بو زيد، 2006، ص 22- 23).

One of the Shehabi princes described the conflict between Prince Bashir and Prince Youssef Shehab as the following:

Prince Youssef's sons and their followers had fled to Tripoli. The governor of the city, Moussa Pasha, was away collecting taxes. His vice, the governor of Dannieh, Fadel Raad Agha, was a close friend of Prince Youssef, and still loyal to him. He offered the prince and his men all that they needed, and received them with respect. Then Prince Bashir sent his army, led by his brother

Prince Hassan, to the village of Zagharta, near Tripoli, and they besieged the village. Prince Bashir led his army to the village of Ehden. His intentions were unclear. All the Shehabi princes and Lebanese dignitary accompanied Prince Bashir to Ehden.

(تاريخ الأمراء الشهابيّين، ج 2، 1984، ص 164)

The Shehabi prince mentioned that Prince Bashir besieged Zagharta. Prince Youssef Shehab might have taken refuge in Zagharta before fleeing to Ehden.

Sheikh Youssef Boulos Douaihi's sacrifice showed the Ehdenians' pledge to defend Lebanon. Prince Bashir represented Al Jazzar's interest, while Prince Youssef Shehab represented the Lebanese ideology.

The main reason behind the support of Sheikh Youssef Boulos Douaihi to Prince Youssef Shehab was the prince's tough policy against the Hamadis. The prince strived to control them and forced them to pay taxes. He confronted them in several battles in Amioun, Jbeil, Akoura and Kalamoun. They fled to Baalbek.

Following the death of Sheikh Youssef Boulos Douaihi, Ehden's

leadership moved to Karam's family, for Sheikh Youssef had two daughters: Kattour and Adba. Sheikh Boutros Karam and Adba were married after the death of Sheikh Youssef.

Battles of Sheikh Boutros Karam:

1-Sheikh Boutros Karam (1806-1846) and the Battle against Ibrahim Pasha, the Egyptian (1838):

Ibrahim Pasha was the son of Mohammad Ali Pasha, the ruler of Egypt. He led military operations on behalf of his father in Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Greece, Syria, Palestine and Lebanon. His father led a coup against the Turks and attacked Turkey. He established the Egyptian state which stretched to Europe.

In 1832, the Ottoman leader of Aleppo, Saradar, sent six thousand fighters to recover Akko off the hands of Ibrahim Pasha, but the Lebanese fighters, who were loyal to Ibrahim Pasha, confronted the Ottoman troops near Al Bared River and defeated them.

Since 1833, the bonds between Ibrahim Pasha and the Maronite people in North Lebanon started to fade.

The Lebanese prince, Bashir Al Shehabi, was a close ally of

Ibrahim Pasha, since Bashir visited Egypt in 1834 and met Mohammad Ali Pasha. The relations between the Ehdenians and Prince Bashir were always unstable.

It is important to mention that the Ehdenians' uprising against Ibrahim Pasha was not separate from the whole national movement in Palestine, Lebanon and Syria since 1834.

The Ehdenians' movement against the Egyptian Army did not mean that they supported the Ottomans against Ibrahim Pasha. It only meant that they had opposed any invader, regardless of his nationality or origin.

In 1838, the Ehdenians and other Lebanese heard that Ibrahim Pasha was planning on recruiting all Lebanese men to his army and he sent one of his military experts, Omar Pasha, to achieve this goal. Some Lebanese families moved to Cyprus and Greece to save their children from the recruitment plan. Ibrahim Pasha ordered his army to collect arms from the Lebanese villages.

(أبو صالح، 1984، ص 273-276)

Furthermore, Ibrahim Pasha began to implement a terrible

economic policy in the Lebanese Mountain. He vowed to monopolize the essential merchandise, so he tried to buy all the silk products in Lebanon and Syria, and planned to unearth coal from Kernael, Slima, Falougha and Mairouba. He also imposed a new sort of tax called "Al Farda". This tax was implemented on teenagers who were over twelve years old. It ranged between 10 to 250 piasters a year (رعد، 1993، ص 226).

Another hefty tax was imposed on poor people, deprived farmers and artisans (سعيد، 2008، ص 264).

The clashes between Prince Bashir and the Ehdenians erupted when the prince sent some of his men to Ehden's woodland to cut trees. They were confronted by two brave Ehdenian men, namely Elias Al Rehban and Roumanos Al Ashi. Soon after, the two men infiltrated with some of their friends to Tripoli and killed all the guards of a military warehouse, which belonged to the Egyptian Army.

Al Rahban and Al Ashi returned to Zagharta carrying boxes of rifles and ammunition. Youssef Bey Karam was then a young

man. He was disturbed by such behaviour.

The Egyptians sent more than one thousand soldiers with cannons to Majdalayya and Zagharta. The cannons were set on Dahr Al Nousairiah.

The citizens of Zagharta prepared themselves to resist the attack, which lasted for about forty minutes.

Two local fighters, Ibrahim Akle and his son, Jabbour, killed several soldiers before they were killed. The Egyptian Army entered Zagharta and wreaked havoc. They chased the Ehdenian fighters to Kfarhata. There, three Ehdenian men were captured and murdered in cold blood.

Elias Al Rehban and Roumanos Al Ashi showed a great deal of bravery. Their mission was to protect women and children from the Egyptian swords.

Ibrahim Pasha ordered his army in Tripoli and I'al to join the attack on the Ehdenians. The local fighters divided their forces into two sections. One took positions in Hairouna under the

leadership of Michael Karam. The other, commanded by Elias Al Rehban and Roumanos Al Ashi, took positions in Bnash'i.

Two severe battles erupted in Hairouna and Bnash'i. The Egyptians fled to Tripoli and the Ehdenians confiscated their rifles, swords and ammunition. Seven hundred rifles and four hundred swords fell into the hands of the Ehdenians.

In Aleppo, Osman Pasha Al Masri (the Egyptian) received the news about the Egyptian Army's defeat. He decided to move to Lebanon with eight thousand soldiers. They were confronted by a frail Kesrawani resistance. The Egyptian Army advanced to North Lebanon, while Ibrahim Pasha ordered his men to attack Ehden from Baalbek and Bcharre.

The Turks and the British heard about the attack on Ehden. They sent to Lebanon a boat full of arms to Heri, near Chekka, in order to assist the Ehdenians. Elias Al Rehban and Roumanos Al Ashi were sent to Chekka with sixty men to receive the arms. On their way back to Ehden, the Egyptian troops ambushed them in Akbat Hairouna, but the two men managed to escape.

On September 19, 1840, about two thousand local fighters gathered under the Lebanese Cedar, near Bcharre, led by Sheikh Boutros Karam. They drew their plan to defend the Maronite Mountains. Elias Al Rehban and Roumanos Al Ashi led three hundred fighters to guard the passages of Dahr Al Kadib. They were attacked by the Egyptian Army. Elias Al Rehban was killed by a bullet to his stomach. Two other defenders were killed with him, namely Moussa Michael Douaihi and Youssef Elias Akouri.

Roumanos Al Ashi was struck by a deadly fever and he died three weeks later.

During the confrontation between the Ehdenians and Ibrahim Pasha the Egyptian, the local fighters demonstrated a great sense of sacrifice. Among the victims were Antonios Al Ahl, Youssef Glamidis and his son Jabbour, Youssef Al Saifi, Shahin Karam, Antonios Kabalan, Semaan Makary and Boutros Al Tetn.

Fortunately, Ibrahim Pasha's era ended when the European countries opposed him, and forced him to go back to Egypt.

2-The Battle of Baabda and Kfarshima (1841):

In 1841, during the great conflict between some Druze and Maronites, the Druze attacked Deir Al Kamar in the Shouf district. The leaders of Deir Al Kamar sought the aid of Sheikh Boutros Karam. He led about five hundred men to the Shouf region. The Druze fighters ambushed them between Baabda and Kfarshima (near Al Warwar Well). The Ehdenians resisted the attack and killed many offenders. Following this battle, the Druze fighters broke their siege around Deir Al Kamar.

3-The Battle against Omar Pasha (1842):

Omar Pasha (the Austrian) was the Ottoman ruler of Lebanon. In 1842, he ordered the governor of Tripoli to chase and capture the leaders of the Al Dahdah family who opposed his instructions. They took refuge in Ehden. When the governor's army reached Ehden, Sheikh Boutros Karam and his men confronted them in Akbat Hairouna and confiscated their horses and arms. The attackers fled to Tripoli. Youssef Bey Karam, the Lebanese hero, was then a young man. He fought the attackers

along with his father, Sheikh Boutros, for the first time, and displayed an outstanding performance.

The Ehdenians still remember two verses that an unknown poet wrote about the bravery of Youssef Bey Karam, during the battle of Akbat Hairouna. The verses say:

يوسف بيك بالعقبه رابِـط   قتل باشا وأربعمية ضابِط

عُمَر باشا لا تخشى المرابِط   إجاك البيك قطّاع الرقاب

(Youssef Bey is standing in Akbeh

He killed a Pasha and four hundred officers

Omar Pasha do not fear the mounds

The heads cutter Youssef Bey is coming after you.)

4-Confronting the Druze (1845):

In 1845, a group of Druze men besieged Zahle in Bekaa. Sheikh Boutros Karam moved swiftly to help the people of Zahle. He confronted the Druze fighters near Kahlounieh and Abadieh and prevailed. Francis Ke'dou showed a great deal of courage

while carrying the Christian flag on which was written:

" الله ينصر دين المسيح"

(May God render the Christian faith victorious).

The Ehdenians returned to Ehden following a conflict between Kesrawan's leaders about the headship and expenses of the war.

5-Boutros Karam Opposes the Ottoman Army (1845):

By the end of 1845, the Ottoman Army swept the Lebanese villages to collect the arms from all the Lebanese. The soldiers treated people harshly and broke into homes and churches. Their conduct provoked the villagers who organized themselves under the leadership of Sheikh Boutros Karam and his son, Youssef.

The Ottoman Army was led by Namek Pasha. Soon after they reached a place called Al Douair, between Tannourine and Hadath Al Jebbeh, they were surprised by the Maronite fighters, but the local fighters were disrupted by the turbulent weather, hence they retreated to Hadath Al Jebbeh, then to Bcharre.

Sheikh Boutros Karam ordered his followers to stand firm in Bcharre and to fight to the last man.

Namek Pasha offered the Ehdenians a cease-fire. He vowed not to enter Ehden if Sheikh Boutros Karam and his son, Youssef, agreed to lay their arms down. The two Sheikhs decided to continue their resistance from Ehden. Namek Pasha besieged Ehden, which was the last undefeated Maronite town in Lebanon. Under the pressure of the offenders, many Ehdenians left their homes and took refuge in Mazra'et al Teffah.

Namek Pasha renewed his truce offer, but Sheikh Boutros Karam and his son, Youssef, refused to surrender.

Fortunately, the Ottoman government issued an order to Namek Pasha to stop his military action against the Lebanese, and to suspend his mission of collecting arms in the Lebanese Mountain.

The Greatest Battles of Youssef Bey Karam:

Youssef Bey Karam was the leader and the Lieutenant Colonel of the Lebanese Christian Region since 1861. He was engaged in a long war against Dawood Pasha, the Ottoman ruler, over Karam's ambition towards a free and independent Lebanon. Karam also engaged in limited clashes with another Lebanese leader, Tanious Chahine, who led the "Peasants' Revolution."

1-Karam and Chahine:

The conflict between Youssef Bey Karam and Tanious Chahine erupted when Youssef Karam was visiting a school in the village of Aintoura. Tanious Chahine threatened to kill him, fired a bullet in the air and verbally abused him.

Karam returned to Jounieh and gathered his men. On March 13, 1861, Karam's fighters attacked Raifoun, Chahine's home village. Karam captured several men and occupied Chahine's house for one day. Chahine fled Raifoun. After several hours,

Karam released some of the detainees before heading back to Jounieh.

Tanious Chahine did not learn from Raifoun's lesson. He again provoked Youssef Karam in Ashkout.

Karam wrote about the incident: We moved to Ghosta, then to Ashkout. When we reached the church, we found a few people. At the end of Ashkout, some members loyal to the tyrant, Tanious Chahine, fired at us. We retaliated and they ran away. We followed them to Raifoun, where we stayed at the school. Some citizens from Kesrawan villages like Ajaltoun, Raifoun, Ashkout, Klaiat and Zouk visited us, presided by their priests, and assured us of their loyalty (عيد، 1995، ص 260).

The relationship between the two Maronite leaders, Youssef Karam and Tanious Chahine, improved during the confrontations of 1860 between the Druze and the Maronites. Philip Hitti quoted that two symbolic armed groups arrived from Kesrawan and North Lebanon to support their brothers in South Lebanon and Matn. One group was led by

Youssef Bey Karam from Ehden and the other group was commanded by Tanious Chahine from Raifoun.

(حتّي، 1972، ص 531)

The two leaders could not reach South Lebanon due to the massive pressure which was imposed on them by France and Turkey.

Tanious Chahine approached Karam in 1867 with a hundred of his men and offered him his help. Karam was then heading to attack Dawood Pasha at his headquarters in Bait Al Dine, but the French Consul at the time sent a letter to Karam urging him to stop his military action.

2-The Road to Zahle:

In the brink of the great confrontation between the Druze and the Christians in Lebanon, hundreds of Druze fighters, led by Ali Bey Hourani and supported by Said Bey Jumblat, attacked Hasbaya (June 15, 1866).

Ismail Al Atrash brought many Druze fighters from Syria to join

their brothers in the Shouf district and Taym Valley. They besieged Zahle, with the support of some Shiite fighters and Bedouins from the Bekaa Valley.

The attackers entered Zahle, killed many citizens and burnt down houses.

Some historians argued that a few fighters from Zahle resisted more than fifteen thousand attackers, but during the collapse of their resistance, they called Youssef Bey Karam for help.

Karam rushed to Zahle with hundreds of northern fighters, but he was surprised by the shortage of the Kesrawani men. Only two hundred men from the whole of Kesrawan joined Karam's fighters.

Youssef Karam contacted the European Consuls and urged them to protect Zahle. He borrowed money to fund displaced people, who took refuge in the Lebanese Maronite monasteries in Jbeil and Batroun.

Karam's men took positions in Bekfayya. They wanted to

prevent the Druze and their supporters from reaching Kesrawan and Matn areas. Surprisingly, Karam was subjected to massive pressure from the Turks and the French, as well as the Maronite Patriarch Boulos Masaad.

Karam wrote to the Patriarch, "There is no way to stop the tyrants but to attack them", but Patriarch Masaad vowed to limit Karam's reaction.

Patriarch Masaad was a spiritual leader and a peace advocate who preached for those who were involved in conflicts to seek peace.

Masaad also heard from the governor of Beirut, Khorshid Pasha, that he will guarantee that Zahle would not fall into the hands of the attackers.

Despite the Patriarch's stance, Karam continued on his way to Zahle. He heard that the Druze had entered the city. He returned to Bekfayya and decided to resist any attack on Matn and Kesrawan.

Henry Jalabert wrote: When he (Youssef Karam) arrived in Kesrawan ahead of a Zghertawi brave-hearted army, he protected the northern region of Nahr Al Kalb from the disaster (Jalabert, 1978, p. 32).

The Druze fighters entered Zahle after they carried the Christian flags and divided their troops into four groups. In front of each group was a man carrying a Cross. They were all singing about the bravery of Karam and his followers.

Zahle's citizens thought that those fighters were Karam's men, but they were in fact Druze. The Zahlian fighters left their barracks and rushed to welcome their allies. The city easily fell into the hands of the offenders (مكاريوس، 1983، ص 213).

3-Boutros Houbaish's Incident (1862):

Boutros Houbaish was a leader of a local militia in Jebbeh. He was a close friend of the Ottomans. One day, Boutros, along with twenty men ambushed Youssef Karam's sister and two of her servants, and kidnapped her brother-in-law.

Only five Ehdenians attacked the villains and managed to free the abducted man. They fired no more than two bullets. Boutros Houbaish and his men fled.

4-Karam's Battles against Dawood Pasha:

Youssef Karam confronted Dawood Pasha in numerous battles such as Bouar, Al Afss, Bnash'i, Seb'el, Ehmej, Nousour Valley, Kfarfou, Hadath, Ain Al Jaouz, Ehden, Ejbeh and Salib Valley. Some of those battles will be described in the following pages.

-Tabarja-Maamiltain Battle (January 6, 1866):

The Ottoman ruler, Dawood Pasha, detained three men who were loyal to Youssef Bey Karam. They were Joachim Bakhos from Ghazir, Youssef Mansour O'daimi and Gergi Boueiri. Joachim Bakhos was familiarly related to Youssef Karam; Bakhos' brother, Tannous, was married to Karam's sister, Therese.

The detention of the three men came after a conflict in Sarba, near Jounieh, between some members of the Khadra family

and others from the Boueiz family. The Boueizes were loyal to the Ottomans.

Dawood Pasha captured three men devoted to Karam in order to provoke Karam's reaction.

Karam marched to Ghazir with his men. One group of them was delivered to Saint Doumit's in Bouar and the other was sent to Ibrahim's River near Jbeil.

Dawood Pasha sent his soldiers to Ghazir. The majority of Ghazir's citizens were loyal to Dawood Pasha, while other villages like Ghosta, Dar'oun, Shnan'ir, Dlebta, Aramoun and Ashkout, along with the Harfouche family and the Khadra family, were loyal to Karam.

In Tabarja, north of Jounieh, Dawood Pasha's Bulgarian troops were seen by Karam's watchers advancing towards the north. A huge battle broke out on Maamiltain's bridge.

(عيد، 1995، ص 233– 241)

During the battle, Sheikh Boulos Nehme Al Ashi, who was

Karam's nephew, Sheikh Michael Tarabay from Tannourine, and a Druze soldier who was fighting with Karam were killed. Sheikh Michael Tannouri, one of Karam's best fighters and friends, was injured. Karam ordered his men to hold their fire and retreat to North Lebanon.

-The Battle of Bnash'i (January 28, 1866):

Following the battle of Tabarja, Karam ordered Zagharta's citizens to move to Ehden.

Soon after, the Ottoman leader, Ameen Pasha, entered Zagharta. Youssef Karam and his eight hundred fighters took positions in Bnash'i and waited for five thousand Ottoman soldiers to approach.

Zagharta was a wealthy town. The Ottoman soldiers invaded it, and robbed the houses and even Our Lady of Zagharta's Church.

Despite a peaceful meeting in Saint Yaacoub's-Kfarsghab between Ameen Pasha and Karam, the Ottoman military leaders

ordered their troops to attack Karam's fighters. The Turks burnt many houses in Bnash'i. They were opposed by Karam's men. Youssef Karam was slightly injured in his leg. One thousand five hundred Ottoman soldiers were killed or injured in Bnash'i, while the others fled. The Lebanese fighters seized six hundred rifles, four cannons, thirty barrels of gunpowder and a big quantity of ammunition.

Following the glorious day in Bnash'i, Ehden and Lebanon paid tribute to some excellent fighters who were killed: Youssef Bakhos Douaihi, Rizk Ishak Mouawad, Michael Jabbour Saade, Boutros Moussa Frangie, Michael Habib Dahdah, Youssef Al Halbi and Youssef Antonios Al Souss.

Ratib Ammoun Eid describes the Battle of Bnash'i as the following:

Karam and his men approached the altar and asked Saint Mary to protect them. At 10 o'clock, they saw about two hundred Lebanese soldiers, who were loyal to the Ottomans, advancing towards them. Another two hundred Turkish soldiers were

following their Lebanese counterparts. Bnash'i's citizens prepared themselves for the confrontation, but Youssef Karam told them not to get worried... When the soldiers arrived in the lowest part of the village, the fear of the villagers increased and the defenders decided to fire. Karam ordered them not to react and to withdraw to the highest part of the village. The Lebanese soldiers started to burn some houses in the lower part. Youssef Karam managed to calm down his fighters saying, "Let them burn the houses. This is not the government's action, but the action of some hasty soldiers."

Youssef Karam was then at his sister's house, who lost her son, Sheikh Boulos Nehme Al Ashi, during the Battle of Tabarja-Maamiltain. It was obvious that the attackers did not spare the houses of the lower and higher parts. Karam wanted to show his enemies that he does not want to fight. Hence, he ordered his men to move to the outskirts of Bnash'i, but the Lebanese soldiers, followed by the Turks, came after them and began shooting. Karam ordered his men to defend themselves. The Turks rushed to occupy a nearby hill, so they could fire from a

higher place. Karam's men tempted the Lebanese soldiers to a deep valley and they besieged them from all sides. The Lebanese soldiers bravely fought until they wasted their ammunition. Their leaders ordered them to keep firing, but they answered, "We no longer have gunpowder and bullets." A group of Karam's men, who were hiding in the bushes, attacked the Lebanese soldiers. The majority of the soldiers were killed or detained. Only thirty five of them could flee behind the rocks and arrived to Tripoli's fortress...

Karam's fighters killed Prince Said, who was the leader of the Lebanese soldiers along with his cousin Prince Hassan Shehab, Salim Traboulsi and a Druze Sheikh named Soulaiman.

The Turks continued firing from the hill top. Karam divided his men and instructed them to encircle the hill from three sides. Suddenly, the Turks found themselves besieged. Many of them were killed without pity; the others laid down their arms to add another number to the detainees.

Ameen Pasha rushed to the scene with three thousand Turkish and two hundred Bulgarian soldiers, but the Ehdenians, who were thrilled with their two previous victories (against the Lebanese soldiers and the Turks), did not fear the great number of men. They engaged with them in a fierce battle which lasted for several hours. All kinds of arms were used in the conflict. The attackers lost many lives and were forced to return. Karam's men chased them to Zagharta and Tripoli...

Ameen Pasha was one of the fleeing personnel. He lost his shoes while running away. The Ottoman Army lost about fifteen hundred Turkish soldiers and numerous Bulgarians.

(عيد،1995، ص 261-263)

-The Battle of Ain Seb'el (March 1, 1866):

Soon after his army's defeat in Bnash'i, Dawood Pasha sent twelve thousand soldiers to North Lebanon under the command of Dervish Pasha. Dawood Pasha ordered his soldiers to kill or capture Youssef Karam.

The Ottoman soldiers invaded Seb'el and Aitou. From there,

they moved to Ehden.

Karam and his men ambushed the attackers near Ain Sab'el, between Zagharta and Ehden, and defeated them. The Lebanese defenders regained control of Seb'el and Aitou, after ten hours of heavy fighting.

The local victims of the Ain Seb'el Battle were Boutros Touma Al Kousa, Youssef Al Ashi, Youssef Matta Frangie, Abboud Al Badwi Al Kousa, Boutros Ne'me Al Kousa, Greige Agnotios Al Masri, Al Badwi Miri, Youssef Elias Yammine, Michael Raffoul Dahdah, Ishak Mouawad and one of Roumanos Dahdah's daughters (name unknown).

-The Battle of Inata (March 22, 1866):

Karam and his men were near Inata, between Bcharre and Baalbek. Dawood Pasha ordered his military leader in Baalbek to lead eleven hundred men to the area in order to kill or capture Karam.

Seven Ehdenian men resisted the intruders: Estephan

Yammine, Asaad Boulos, Elias Al Kortbani, Tannous Karam, Youssef Barakat, Abou Tunn and Abou Hassoun.

Youssef Karam was sitting behind the rocks along with Antonios Jerr Douaihi, Antoine Ghazali, Youssef Al M'errawi, Dib Al Beiruti, and Gebrael Fashkha. The six men heard the noise of the battle. They rushed to join their colleagues and forced the Ottoman soldiers to flee to Baalbek.

-The Battle of Miziara's Valley (August 20, 1866):

Dawood Pasha sent nine thousand soldiers to Miziara's Valley to search for Youssef Karam and his men. Dervish Pasha himself commanded the Ottoman troops who besieged Miziara. Youssef Karam and his sixty men managed to leave Miziara's Valley to Ehden's woodland in the dark. He said to his followers, "We should choose between two options: to die under our arms or to leave under occupation. What do you choose?" They all replied, "We choose to die under our arms."

Karam's men fought ferociously and broke the siege. Two of them were injured and five others were captured.

- The Battle of Ehden (December 18, 1866):

Dawood Pasha ordered Prince Ameen, the administrator of Batroun municipality, to lead fifty soldiers to Ehden in order to capture Karam.

Karam's house was already burnt. The house's guard asked the soldiers, "What do you want from this burnt house?" They did not answer and they kept searching around the house. Karam was sleeping in the tavern and he heard the conversation. He got out and addressed the soldiers, "Have you got legs to enter this place?" One of the soldiers collapsed from fear and the others escaped.

Karam's men and a group of Ehden's citizens chased them and captured three of them. A man from Bcharre, who was loyal to the Ottomans, was injured. Karam handed him to a priest. A few hours later, Karam released the three captured soldiers.

(عيد، 1995، ص 351 – 352)

The Battles of the 20^{th} Century:

1-The Battle of Al Hussein's Bridge in Syria (1922):

The Battle of Al Hussein's Bridge in Syria in 1922 is a clear indication of the friendship between France and the people of Zagharta, as many Ehdenians joined the French troops. They were Hanna Youssef Saade, Georges Youssef Saade, Gebrael Saidi, Semaan Roumanos Jerr Douaihi, Youssef Boutros Al Halbi, Greige Sarkis Frangie, Semaan Bou Semaan, Nehme Greige Mouawad, Tannous Elias Al Khoury, Youssef Boutros Al Baba Douaihi, Tannous Ibrahim Moura, Youssef Wehbe Douaihi, Toufic Asaad Yammine, Said Al Badwi Al Akoury, Karim Ishac Mouawad, Sarkis Asaad Yammine, Aziz Youssef Al Frangi, Georges Sarkis Bou Shebel, Michael Bou Rida, Georges Salim Al Khoury, Sarkis Elias Al Khoury, Salim Youssef Rizk and Sarkis Youssef Dahdah.

In 1919, the French troops were sent to Damascus to put an end to Prince Faisal's Revolution. The French authorities sent the

Ehdenians to Tripoli in order to restrain security in the absence of the French troops.

In 1922, Sheikh Saleh Al Ali revolted in Alawis' Mountain in Syria. His men demolished a bridge called Hussein's Bridge, near the city of Tartus.

The French asked their friends, the citizens of Zagharta, for help. A group of men vowed to travel to Syria to guard the bridge and prevent the rebels from destroying it again. Most of the Ehdenian volunteers were only twenty years old. Only one man, Khalil Antonios Frangie, was a few years older.

The French did not believe that those young men could protect the bridge. Khalil Antonios Frangie said to the French commander, "We came here to engage in a fight. You will see during the first battle what those young men from Ehden can do."

The French commander decided to examine the courage of the Ehdenians. He sent his troops to the bridge at night, and ordered them to fire in the air. As they did, the young Ehdenian men

jumped to their arms and confronted the French without knowing that they were their friends. The French troops fled to the bush. Two of them were killed.

Following this incident, the French commander entrusted the Ehdenians with a more critical mission: Fighting Sheikh Saleh Al Ali and his followers, before they returned to Ehden.

The Ehdenians who helped the French Army in Syria were Khalil Antonios Frangie, Gebrael Antonios Frangie, Wadi' Khalil Frangie, Jamil Michael Frangie, Fouad Khalil Breiss Frangie, Georges Sarkis Al Kendlaft Mouawad, Hanna Khalil Abboud Mouawad, Nayef Youssef Ke'do Mouawad, Sarkis Al Khawaja, Roumanos Hanna Al Ashi, Boutros Abdallah Basim, Salman Asaad Ayrout, Roumanos Asaad Ayrout, Farid Sem'an Bou Dra', Youssef Ghantous Saadeh, Bechara Al Hage Al Hossri, Hanna Al Hage Al Hossri, Ezzat Boutros Yammine, Jahjah Boutros Yammine, Tannous Al Shakra Finianos, Boutros Asaad Sawma, Tannous Sara, Georges Al Khoury, Joachim Yammine, Youssef Rizk Re'aidy, Jamil Boulos Tannous Douaihi, Youssef Boutros Al Kareh, Sarkis Basim, Gebrael Zallou'a, Sarkis Zallou'a, Georges

Zallou'a, Tannous Semaan Gitany, Sid Boulos Gitany, Michael Sarkis Al Kareh, Semaan Al Kertbani, Elias Semaan Al Kertbani, Nakhle Abboud, Abboud Khalil Abboud, Doumit Al Koussa, Hanna Dahdah, Francis Dahdah, Boulos Astasia, Mehsen Boutros Zakhia Douaihi, Rustom Youssef Al Badri, Boulos Khawwam, Boutros Khawwam, Youssef Saidi, Kabalan Asaad Yaacoub, Ne'metallah Nassour Karam, Sarkis Elias Al Khoury and Sarkis Asaad Yammine.

(خازن، ج1، 1983، ص 285)

2-The Ehdenians and the Druze Revolution (1925):

When the Druze Revolution erupted in 1925, a group of rebels crossed the border from Syria and attacked the Christian villages in South Lebanon. They marched into Hasbaya, then they invaded Kawkaba (Zagharta of the South), which is a tiny village. They burnt houses and killed many citizens.

Boutros Bechara Karam rushed to South Lebanon with forty Maronite fighters, most of whom were from Zagharta.

They entered Kawkaba and engaged with the attackers. Many volunteers from Hasbayya joined the Syrian attackers. When Boutros Bechara Karam saw the huge number of rebels, he ordered his men to retreat to Jdaidet Marje'oun.

On Saturday, October 14, Boutros Bechara Karam received a letter from one of the rebels' leaders, Amoud Al Dervish, who urged Karam to leave South Lebanon and return to the North.

The Lebanese leaders, especially in South Lebanon, vowed to establish a group of national guards to protect the Lebanese villages against the rebels' raids. The Lebanese dignitaries referred the command of the group to Sheikh Khalil Karam from Ehden, but the Syrian attackers decided to leave South Lebanon.

3- Sheikh Wadih Asaad Douaihi - The Battle of Baazaran (1926):

Sheikh Wadih Asaad Douaihi was one of the most brilliant military officers in Lebanon during the Druze Revolution. He led numerous military missions in Zahle, Shouf and other parts of Lebanon.

In 1926, he was sent with a handful of his soldiers to Baazaran, in the Shouf district, to capture three dangerous rebels. He apprehended them and prepared to escort them to Beirut. When the military convoy reached the outskirts of Baazaran, other rebels started firing on them. Douaihi and his men took refuge in a house owned by the Jumblat family.

Soon after, Baazaran villagers joined the attackers against the Lebanese military convoy. The attackers' demand was clear: Release the three rebels or die!... After six hours of exchanging fire between the Lebanese soldiers and the rebels, the attackers warned the Lebanese soldiers again to release the captured men. In spite of the great number of the attackers and the tight siege around the Lebanese soldiers, Sheikh Wadih refused the demand and ordered his men to keep fighting.

Another Lebanese Army brigade arrived from Bait Al Dine to support Sheikh Wadih and his men. They defeated the attackers and returned to Beirut with the captured rebels.

(الدويهي، 2002، ص 369-370)

4-Revolution of Dannieh (1926)

The Dannieh Revolution erupted when Said Al A'ss, who was the chief military leader of the revolution, arrived in Dannieh and encouraged the people to trigger their arms against the French troops.

In 1926, three rebels, Mohammad Rashed Shawk, Kassem Shawk and Khodr Mohammad Fatfat, assassinated Salim Michael, who was then a military commander in Seer Dannieh.

Following this incident, the French authorities assumed that the revolution would also erupt in Tripoli. They demanded that Seer Dannieh and Bkarsouna pay thirty three thousand gold piasters, thirty rifles and five hundred cartridges, in a deadline of ten days.

The two village citizens ignored the request. Hence, the French authorities sent a group of soldiers to Kfarhabou, between Zagharta and Dannieh. The soldiers in Kfarhabou were attacked by the rebels, but they opposed them firmly and defeated them.

The rebels fled to the high mountains and left behind them

some firearms, ammunition and stolen cattle.

Soon after, the rebels launched another attack on the army after they received support from Said Al A'ss himself. The soldiers vowed to retreat.

The citizens of Zagharta heard the news about the Kfarhabou battle. They also heard that Said Al A'ss was planning on moving his revolution to their neighbourhood. They prepared their arms and moved to E'shash to offer their help to the soldiers.

The Ehdenian fighters ambushed the rebels. The almost defeated French soldiers regained their spirits due to the bravery of the Ehdenians. The rebels ran off again.

After the rebels were defeated, their military leader, Sa'id Al A'ss, wrote letters to Sheikh Khalil Karam and Sheikh Fouad Douaihi, asking them not to interfere in the conflict. He urged the two leaders to meet him face to face and discuss the aims of the revolution. They refused to meet him.

Meanwhile, the French leadership sent three battalions to

dismantle the revolution. One of them was directed to Meziara - Behwaita, the other was sent to E'shash, and the third took positions in Arka (Akkar). After sporadic fighting, the three battalions met in Seer Dannieh. The French Army used warplanes to shell the rebels' positions. Two villages, Al Sfiri (Mrah Sfiri) and Bkarsouna, were partially destroyed. As a result, the French regained their control over Dannieh.

As an act of retaliation, the rebels killed in Akroum one Ehdenian soldier, Boutros Khalil Andrawos (خازن، ج 1، 1983، ص 272).

Unfortunately, the French authorities did not admire the Ehdenians' support of the French troops. In 1929, the French chose twice Wadih Tarabay as a member of parliament instead of Youssef Karam. The relationship between the French and the Ehdenians deteriorated further when tens of Zagharta's citizens protested in Tripoli. The French troops vowed not to use their rifles for they were aware of the Ehdenians' possible reaction, but some members of the French Army from Syrian origin opened their fire to kill or injure a number of Ehdenians.

5-The Battles of 1975-1976

Since the Lebanese War erupted in April 13, 1975, the Ehdenian fighters engaged in several battles, to protect their land and Lebanon's identity as a free country.

The Zaghartawi warriors guarded the boundaries of Zagharta, between Kobbeh in Tripoli and Majdalayya. With help from the local citizens, they protected Christian villages in Zawyeh, while Muslim villages around Zagharta were also immune from any action of revenge. Zagharta paid a huge price: Tens of martyrs for Lebanon's sake. Zagharta and Ehden received tons of missiles. Many civilians were killed.

All Ehdenians recalled the great attack of the "Al Yarmuke Brigade" that moved in January 1976, more than eight thousand men from Syria to the Bekaa Valley and North Lebanon.

(نصّار، 1977، ص 299)

More than six thousand heavily armed men attacked Zagharta from three directions. A handful of "The Zaghartawi Liberation Army - Liwaa Al Marada" defeated the offenders, who were

killed, injured or captured.

Khalil Khoury refers to the connections between the pro-Syrian "Al Yarmuke Brigade" and the pressure led by the Syrian government on the then Lebanese President, Soulaiman Frangie. Khoury wrote: The Syrian-Palestinian pressure was extremely immense, especially in Damour, and E'shash Monastery, and the Syrian forces entered Lebanon to fight against the Christian side, under the logo of the Palestinian Liberation Army. In January 21, 1976, a Syrian delegation arrived in the presidential palace in Baabda presided by the then Syrian Foreign Minister, Abd El Halim Khaddam, with the Vice Defence Minister, Hekmat Shehabi and the head of the Arial Intelligence, Nagi Jamil. The President Soulaiman Frangie received the delegation. Khaddam said, "We are here to solve the problem." Meanwhile, the town of Assaadiyat, the haven of the former President Kamil Shamoun, fell into the hands of the attackers. Shamoun managed to escape in a helicopter commanded by a pilot from the Abou Dargham family. Damour in the Shouf district and Andaket (In Akkar) were invaded...

The Syrian delegation arrival coincided with an unprecedented attack and a fierce battle around Zagharta. It seemed that the main aim of the visit was to put pressure on Soulaiman Frangie, following the fall of the Christian areas into the hands of the Palestinians who were supported by Syria, Russia and the Communist states...

The attack on Zagharta failed and the defenders killed hundreds of militants. Their bodies lay dormant for several days in the olive fields that surround Zagharta.

During the meeting between President Frangie and the Syrian delegation, Frangie received hundreds of military identity cards that proved that the deceased attackers were soldiers and officers in the Syrian Army and not Palestinians. Frangie was extremely upset, for he was sure that the man who ordered the attack on Zagharta was a member of the delegation, Hikmat Shehabi (الخوري، 2013، ص1).

Hazem Saghieh wrote the following about the Battle of January 1976: Zagharta's citizens had their own agony with

the Syrian regime, for the pro-Syrian “Al Yarmuke Brigade” attacked them and Zagharta was on the verge of defeat. Tens of its citizens and Zawyeh's citizens were killed and a big number of the attackers were shot dead. This battle made the people of Zagharta even prouder. Some of them say that Turkey itself was not strong enough to invade Zagharta.

(صاغية، والشيخ، 2013، ص. 1)

With a small number of men, Zagharta's citizens managed to protect their town and keep it free from any invasion.

Liwaa Al Marada spread the Ehdenian fighters and several men from the Zawyeh district, on a forty two kilometer line in order to protect Zagharta, Ehden and the neighbourhood. Zagharta was subjected to many attacks such as on September 9, 1975 and January 21, 1976.

On March 11, 1976, the then called “The Arabian Army of Lebanon”, led by Ahmad Al Khatib, attacked two military bases loyal to the late President, Soulaiman Frangie, in Kobbeh, Tripoli.

Khatib paved the way for Abd Al Aziz Al Ahdab to declare a military coup and appoint himself as the Interim Military Ruler. He demanded the resignation of President Soulaiman Frangie and his government. He also called the House of Representatives to elect a new president in seven days.

Frangie refused to resign from his post as elected president, despite the great pressure imposed on him. He also dismissed a statement signed by sixty parliament members requiring his resignation. The Presidential Palace in Baabda was bombarded. Frangie moved to Zouk and told the BBC, "I will continue my term and I won't resign." The Lebanese Army was accordingly divided into two sections, one loyal to Abd Al Aziz Al Ahdab and Ahmad Al Khatib, and the other, led by Antoine Barakat, loyal to the president.

(حرب لبنان كي لا يعيد التاريخ نفسه، ص 86-87)

Because of the consistency of President Frangie and the resistance of the Lebanese people, Al Ahdab decided on May 21, 1976, to terminate his coup. He declared his withdrawal from all military activities and his desire to shift himself to

politics.

“The Arabian Army of Lebanon” moved troops to Kobbeh and surrounded Bahjat Ghanem’s military base, Youssef Hleil’s military base and police headquarters. Some soldiers from the military bases joined the attackers. Kobbeh became a battlefield.

Many were killed or injured. The soldiers who were loyal to President Frangie retreated to the Military Leadership Center of North Lebanon. The two military bases and the police headquarters were invaded by the attackers.

When the news of the battle reached Zagharta, “The Zaghartawi Liberation Army - Liwaa Al Marada” moved some fighters to Kobbeh. They managed to capture four military officers, namely Mohammad Youssef Kayyal, Colonel Yassine Souaid, Major Rafic Al Hasan and Major Hasan Tout. They took them to the Presidential Palace in Ehden with another officer, Major Jamil Nassif. The Ehdenian fighters contacted the member of Parliament and Minister Tony Soulaiman Frangie, who ordered them to treat the captured men with

honour and dignity. Soon after, he rushed from Baabda to Ehden in order to personally guarantee the safe release of the detained leaders.

On July 5, 1976, more than ten thousand men invaded Chekka. They killed forty three civilians and kidnapped forty six others. Zagharta's fighters joined their colleagues from Bcharre, Batroun, Beirut, Kfar Abida and other Lebanese villages and towns to free Chekka from the offenders.

Samir Kassir describes Chekka's massacre as a large military operation which was disturbed by dangerous violations and mass killings on which an Islamic group from Tripoli "Jund Allah" was responsible.

Kassir added: The next day, the Lebanese fighters launched an attack and freed Chekka, led by some Lebanese Army's officers such as Brigader General Victor Khoury, who will be the next Lebanese Army's leader (قصير، 2007، ص 224).

We should proudly mention that numerous Ehdenian women were seen in battlefields, defending their country and virtues of

freedom, honour and sovereignty. Some of the women who sacrificed their lives for the glory of Lebanon were Nadira Tannous Frangie, Tamam Gergi Badwi, Hasna Boutros Bchara, Hasna Georges Frangie, Hamideh Al Khoury Saadeh, Saideh Al Zaatini, Miray Al Badwi Ne'meh, Nadia Al Ghazal and Barbara Ishac.

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